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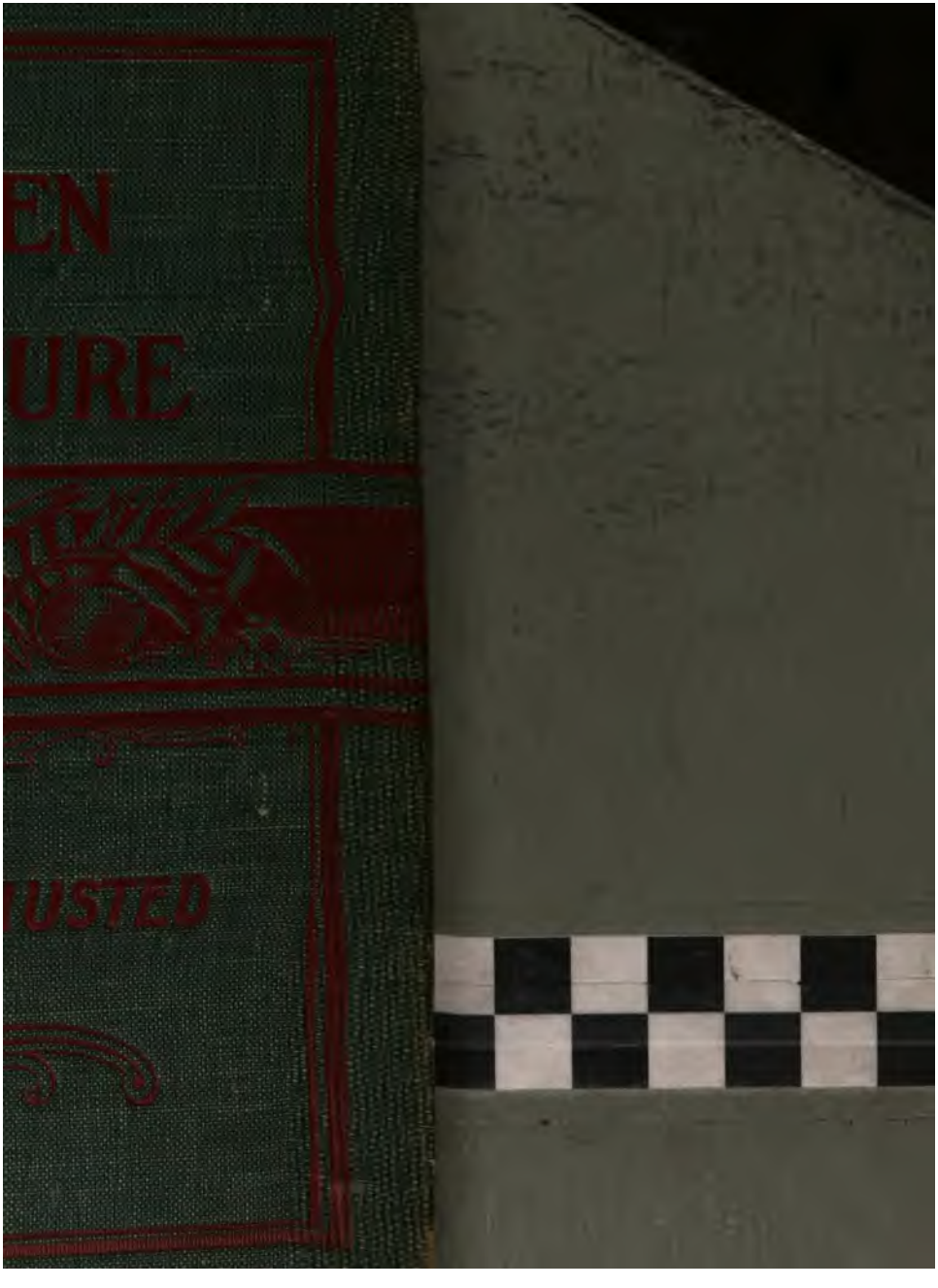
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1. Children in fiction.

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Donald Blum Strauss's book.

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Children in Literature

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF VICTOR HUGO, CHARLES DICKENS, AND GEORGE ELIOT

BY

MARY H. HUSTED

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PREFACE

THE most valuable equipment which a school can give to its boys and girls is a love of good literature. It is a builder of character; it gives a command of good language that can be gained in no other way; it gives a knowledge of human nature, and supplies not only standards in language but right ideals; and as Anthony Trollope says, "Book love, my friends, is your pass to the greatest, the purest, and the most perfect pleasures that God has prepared for his creatures."

The best books are not for scholars only, for great books that deal with elemental truths and characters may be given to the young and be better appreciated than many written especially for them. John Ruskin says: "The greatest books contain food for all ages."

There has been for the past few years a most commendable movement in the public schools to bring before the children the great literature of the world. This little book is sent forth in the hope that it may aid this movement and have its influence in the right direction, leading some young people to desire a fuller ac

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quaintance with the authors of the selections herein adapted.

Children will not read because they are told it is good for them; the key-note to a love for good reading is *interest*. When that has been awakened, they will do the rest with a little wise guidance. Knowing the interest children take in stories about children has led the writer to look for these in good literature, and the result is herein set forth.

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THE STORY OF COSETTE

(From "Les Miserables")

VICTOR HUGO

VICTOR HUGO

THE story of Cosette is taken from "Les Miserables," one of Victor Hugo's greatest works.

Victor Marie Hugo was born in 1802, in the South of France. His boyhood was spent partly in Paris, partly in Italy, and partly in Spain. He showed his poetic ability very early, for at the age of sixteen he won a prize for a poem which he wrote in one night.

Before he was thirty he had published a number of works and was famous. He was made an officer of the Legion of Honor and a peer of France.

After the Revolution he was banished, and he took up his residence in the island of Jersey, where he lived for twenty years. His pen was not idle while he was here, for he published many poems, letters and pamphlets.

He wrote a number of dramas, and many poems and novels. Among his best works are "Les Miserables," "The Man Who Laughs," "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," "The Toilers of the Sea," and "Ninety-Three."

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"GET ALONG."

THE STORY OF COSETTE

I

COSETTE'S HOME

Four new guests had just come in.

Cosette was musing sadly; for though she was only eight years old, she had already suffered so much that she mused with the mournful air of an old woman. Cosette was thinking that it was evening, late in the evening, that she had been obliged to fill the bowls and pitchers in the rooms of the travelers who had arrived, and that there was no more water in the cistern.

One thing comforted her a little; they did not drink much water in the Thenardier tavern. There were plenty of people there who were thirsty, but it was that kind of thirst which reaches rather toward the jug than the pitcher.

However, there was a moment when the child trembled; the Thenardiess raised the cover of a kettle which was boiling on the range, then took a glass and hastily approached the cistern. She turned the faucet, the

child had raised her head and followed all her movements. A thin stream of water ran from the faucet and filled the glass half full.

"Here," she said, "there is no more water!" Then she was silent for a moment. The child held her breath.

"Pshaw!" continued the Thenardiess, examining the half-filled glass, "there is enough of it, such as it is."

Cosette resumed her work, but for more than a quarter of an hour she felt her heart leaping into her throat like a great ball.

All at once, one of the peddlers who lodged in the tavern came in and said in a harsh voice:

"You have not watered my horse."

"Well," said the Thenardiess, "if the beast has not had any water, she must have some."

Then, looking about her, "Well, what has become of that girl?"

She stooped down and discovered Cosette crouched at the other end of the table, almost under the feet of the drinkers.

"Aren't you coming?" cried the Thenardiess.

Cosette came out of the kind of hole where she had hidden. The Thenardiess continued:

"Mademoiselle Dog-without-a-name, go and carry some drink to this horse."

"But, ma'am," said Cosette feebly, "there is no water."

The Thenardiess threw the street door wide open.

"Well, go after some! There is some at the spring."

Cosette hung her head and went for an empty bucket that was by the chimney corner.

"Here, Mademoiselle Toad," added the Thenardiess, "get a big loaf at the baker's as you come back. Here is fifteen sous."

Cosette had a little pocket in the side of her apron; she took the piece without saying a word and put it in that pocket. Then she remained motionless, bucket in hand, the open door before her. She seemed to be waiting for somebody to come to her aid.

"Get along!" cried the Thenardiess. Cosette went out. The door closed.

A row of booths extended along the street from the church as far as the tavern. These booths were all illuminated with candles. In retaliation not a star was to be seen in the sky. The last of these stalls, set up exactly opposite Thenardier's door, was a toy-shop, all glittering with trinkets, glass beads and things magnificent in tin. In the first rank, and in front, the merchant had placed upon a bed of white napkins, a great doll nearly two feet high, dressed in a robe of pink crêpe, and with real hair and enamel eyes.

At the moment when Cosette went out, bucket in hand, all gloomy and overwhelmed as she was, she could not help raising her eyes toward this wonderful doll, toward *the lady,* as she called it. The poor child stopped, petrified. She had not seen this doll so near before. This whole booth seemed a palace to her; this doll was not a doll, it was a vision. It was joy, splendor, riches, happiness, and it appeared in a sort of chimerical radiance to this unfortunate little being, buried so deeply in a cold and dismal misery. Cosette was measuring with the sad and simple sagacity of childhood the abyss which separated her from that doll. She was saying to herself that one must be a queen, or at least a princess, to have a " thing " like that.

In this adoration she forgot everything, even the errand on which she had been sent. Suddenly the harsh voice of the Thenardiess called her back to the reality: " How, jade, haven't you gone yet? Hold on; I am coming for you! I'd like to know what she's doing here! Little monster, be off! "

Cosette fled with her bucket, running as fast as she could. She looked no more at the displays in the booths. So long as she was in the Lane du Boulanger and in the vicinity of the church, the illuminated stalls lighted the way, but soon the last gleam from the last

stall disappeared. The poor child found herself in darkness.

The farther she went the thicker became the darkness. Cosette thus passed through the labyrinth of crooked and deserted streets; as long as she had houses, or even walls, on the sides of the road she went on boldly enough. When she had passed the corner of the last house Cosette stopped. To go beyond the last booth had been difficult; to go farther than the last house became impossible.

The child cast a pitiful glance before her and behind her. What could she do? What would become of her if she went back? Then she took the road to the spring again and began to run. She ran out of the village; she ran into the woods, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. She did not stop running until out of breath, and even then she staggered on. She went right on, desperate. Even while running she wanted to cry.

The nocturnal tremulousness of the forest wrapped her about completely. She thought no more; she saw nothing more. The immensity of night confronted this little creature. On the one side, the infinite shadow; on the other, an atom.

It was only seven or eight minutes' walk from the edge of the woods to the spring. Cosette knew the road from traveling it several times a day. Strange

thing she did not lose her way. A remnant of instinct guided her. But she neither turned her eyes to the right nor to the left, for fear of seeing things in the trees and in the bushes. Thus she arrived at the spring.

Cosette did not take time to breathe. It was very dark, but she was accustomed to come to this fountain. She felt with her left hand in the darkness for a young oak which bent over the spring, and usually served her as a support, found a branch, swung herself from it, bent down and plunged the bucket in the water. She was for a moment so excited that her strength was tripled. When she was thus bent over she did not notice that the pocket of her apron emptied itself into the spring. The fifteen-sou piece fell into the water. Cosette neither saw it nor heard it fall. She drew out the bucket almost full and set it on the grass.

This done, she perceived that her strength was exhausted. She was anxious to start at once, but the effort of filling the bucket had been so great that it was impossible for her to take a step. She was compelled to sit down. She fell upon the grass and remained in a crouching posture.

Words fail to express the peculiar strangeness of the terror that now came over her, which chilled her through and through. Her eye had become wild.

She felt that perhaps she would be compelled to return there at the same hour the next night.

She arose. She had only one thought, to fly; to fly with all her might across woods, across fields, to houses, to windows, to lighted candles. Her eyes fell upon the bucket that was before her. Such was the dread with which the Thenardiess inspired her that she did not dare to go without the bucket of water. She grasped the handle with both hands. She could hardly lift the bucket.

She went a dozen steps in this manner, but the bucket was full; it was heavy; she was compelled to rest it on the ground. She breathed an instant, then grasped the handle again and walked on, this time a little longer. But she had to stop again. After a few seconds she started on. She walked, bending forward, her head down, like an old woman; the weight of the bucket strained and stiffened her thin arms. The iron handle was numbing and freezing her little wet hands; from time to time she had to stop, and every time she stopped the cold water that splashed from the bucket fell upon her naked knees.

She breathed with a kind of mournful rattle; sobs choked her, but she did not dare to weep, so fearful was she of the Thenardiess, even at a distance. She was worn out with fatigue, and was not yet out of the forest. Arriving near an old chestnut tree, which she

knew, she made a last halt, longer than the others, to get well rested, then she gathered all her strength, took up the bucket again, and began to walk on courageously. Meanwhile the poor little despairing thing could not help crying: "Oh, my God! my God!"

At that moment she felt all at once that the weight of the bucket was gone. A hand which seemed enormous to her, had just caught the handle and was carrying it easily. She raised her head. A large dark form, straight and erect, was walking beside her in the gloom. It was a man who had come up behind her and whom she had not heard. This man, without saying a word, had grasped the handle of the bucket she was carrying.

There are instincts for all the crises of life.

The child was not afraid.

II

COSETTE FINDS A FRIEND

COSETTE, we have said, was not afraid.

The man spoke to her. His voice was serious, and was almost a whisper.

"My child, that is very heavy for you, which you are carrying there."

"Yes, monsieur."

"Give it to me," the man continued. "I will carry it for you."

Cosette let go of the bucket. The man walked along with her. "It is very heavy, indeed," said he to himself. Then he added: "Little girl, how old are you?"

"Eight years, monsieur."

"And have you come far in this way?"

"From the spring in the woods."

"And are you going far?"

"A good quarter of an hour from here."

The man remained a moment without speaking, then he said abruptly:

"You have no mother, then?"

"I don't believe I have. All the rest have one. For my part, I have none."

The man stopped, put the bucket on the ground, stooped down and placed his hands upon the child's shoulders, making an effort to look at her and see her face in the darkness. The thin and puny face of Cosette was vaguely outlined in the livid light of the sky.

"What is your name?" said the man.

"Cosette."

A moment after he asked:

"Little girl, where do you live?"

"At Montfermeil, if you know it."

"Is it there that we are going?"

"Yes, monsieur."

He made another pause, then he began:

"Who is it that has sent you out into the woods after water at this time of night?"

"Madame Thenardier."

"What does she do, your Madame Thenardier?"

"She is my mistress," said the child. "She keeps the tavern."

"The tavern," said the man. "Well, I am going there to lodge to-night. Show me the way."

The man walked very fast. Cosette followed him without difficulty. She felt fatigue no more. From time to time she raised her eyes toward this man with a sort of tranquillity and inexpressible confidence.

They reached the village; Cosette guided the stranger through the streets. They passed by the bakery, but Cosette did not think of the bread she was to have brought back. The man questioned her no more, and now maintained a mournful silence. When they had passed the church, the man, seeing all these booths in the street, asked Cosette:

"Is it fair time here?"

"No, monsieur, it is Christmas."

As they drew near the tavern Cosette timidly touched his arm:

"Monsieur."

"What, my child?"

"Here we are, close by the house."

"Well?"

"Will you let me take the bucket now?"

"What for?"

"Because, if Madame sees that anybody brought it for me, she will beat me."

The man gave her the bucket. A moment after they were at the door of the chop-house.

Cosette could not help casting one look toward the grand doll still displayed in the toy-shop, then she rapped. The door opened. The Thenardiess appeared with a candle in her hand.

"Oh! it is you, you little beggar! You have taken your time! She has been playing, the wench!"

"Madame," said Cosette, trembling, "here is a gentleman who is coming to lodge."

The Thenardiess very quickly replaced her fierce air by her amiable grimace, a change at sight peculiar to inn-keepers, and looked for the new-comer with eager eyes.

"Is it monsieur?" said she.

"Yes, madame," answered the man, touching his hat.

Rich travelers are not so polite. This gesture and the sight of the stranger's costume and baggage which the Thenardiess passed in review at a glance made the

amiable grimace disappear and the fierce air reappear. She added, dryly:

"Enter, good man."

The "good man" entered. The Thenardiess cast a second glance at him, examined particularly his long coat, which was absolutely threadbare, and his hat, which was somewhat broken, and with a nod, a wink and a turn of her nose, consulted her husband. The husband answered by that imperceptible shake of the forefinger which, supported by a protrusion of the lips, signifies in such a case "complete destitution." Upon this the Thenardiess exclaimed:

"Ah! my brave man, I am very sorry, but I have no room."

"Put me where you will," said the man, "in the garret, in the stable, I will pay as if I had a room."

"Forty sous."

"Forty sous. Well."

"In advance."

"Forty sous," whispered a wagoner to the Thenardiess, "but it is only twenty sous."

"It is forty sous for him," replied the Thenardiess, in the same tone. "I don't lodge poor people for less."

Meanwhile the man, after leaving his stick and bundle on the bench, had seated himself at a table on which Cosette had been quick to place a bottle of wine

and a glass. She had resumed her place under the kitchen table and her knitting. The man, who hardly touched his lips to the wine he had turned out, was contemplating the child with a strange attention.

Cosette was ugly. Happy, she might, perhaps, have been pretty. Cosette was thin and pale; she was nearly eight years old, but one would hardly have thought her six. Her large eyes, sunk in a sort of shadow, were almost put out by continual weeping. The corners of her mouth had that curve of habitual anguish which is seen in the condemned and in the hopelessly sick. Her hands were covered with chilblains. The light of the fire which was shining upon her made her bones stand out and rendered her thinness fearfully visible. As she was always shivering, she had acquired the habit of drawing her knees together. Her whole dress was nothing but a rag, which would have excited pity in the summer, and which excited horror in the winter. Her skin showed here and there, and black and blue spots could be distinguished, which indicated the places when the Thenardiess had touched her. The whole person of this child, her gait, her attitude, the sound of her voice, her looks, her silence, expressed and uttered a single idea — fear.

This fear was such that in coming in, all wet as she was, Cosette had not dared go and dry herself by the fire, but had gone silently to her work.

The man in the yellow coat did not take his eyes from Cosette.

Suddenly the Thenardiess exclaimed:

"Oh! I forgot that bread!"

Cosette, according to her custom whenever the Thenardiess raised her voice, sprang out quickly from under the table.

She had entirely forgotten the bread. She had recourse to the expedient of children who are always terrified. She lied:

"Madame, the baker's was shut."

"I'll find out to-morrow if that is true," said the Thenardiess. "Give me back the fifteen-sou piece."

Cosette plunged her hand into her apron pocket and turned white. The fifteen-sou piece was not there.

"Come," said the Thenardiess; "didn't you hear me?"

Cosette turned her pocket inside out; there was nothing there. What could have become of that money? The little unfortunate could not utter a word. She was petrified.

"Have you lost it, the fifteen-sou piece?" screamed the Thenardiess. At the same time she reached her arm toward the cowhide hanging in the chimney corner.

This menacing movement gave Cosette the strength

to cry out: " Forgive me! Madame! Madame! I won't do so any more! "

The Thenardiess took down the whip.

Meanwhile the man in the yellow coat had been fumbling in his waistcoat pocket without being noticed. The other travelers paid no attention to anything. Cosette was writhing with anguish in the chimney corner, trying to gather up and hide her poor, half-naked limbs. The Thenardiess raised her arm.

" I beg your pardon, madame," said the man; " but I just saw something fall out of the pocket of that little girl's apron and roll away. That may be it."

At the same time he stooped down and appeared to search on the floor for an instant.

" Just so, here it is," said he, rising.

And he handed a silver piece to the Thenardiess.

" Yes, that is it," said she.

That was not it, for it was a twenty-sou piece, but the Thenardiess found her profit in it. She put the piece in her pocket and contented herself with casting a ferocious look at the child and saying:

" Don't let that happen again, ever." Cosette went back to what the Thenardiess called " her hole," and her large eyes, fixed upon the unknown traveler, began to assume an expression that they had never known before. It was still only an artless astonishment, but a sort of blind confidence was associated with it.

A door now opened and Eponine and Azelma came in. They were really two pretty little girls, rather city girls than peasants, very charming, one with her well-polished auburn tresses, the other with her long black braids falling down her back, and both so lively, neat, plump, fresh and healthy, that it was a pleasure to see them. When they entered the Thenardiess said to them in a scolding tone, which was full of adoration: "Ah! you are here, then, you children!"

They went and sat down by the fire. They had a doll which they turned backward and forward upon their knees with many pretty prattlings. From time to time Cosette raised her eyes from her knitting and looked sadly at them as they were playing.

Eponine and Azelma did not notice Cosette. To them she was like the dog. These three little girls could not count twenty-four years among them all, and they already represented all human society; on one side envy, on the other disdain.

The doll of the Thenardier sisters was very much faded, and very old and broken; but it appeared none the less wonderful to Cosette, who had never in her life had a doll, a real doll, to use an expression that all children will understand. All at once the Thenardiess, who was continually going and coming about the room, noticed that Cosette's attention was distracted, and

that instead of working she was busied with the little girls who were playing.

"Ah! I've caught you!" cried she. "That is the way you work! I'll make you work with a cowhide, I will."

The stranger without leaving his chair, turned toward the Thenardiess.

"Madame," said he, smiling diffidently, "let her play!"

"She must work, for she eats. I don't support her to do nothing."

"What is she making?" said the stranger, in that gentle voice which contrasted so strangely with his beggar's clothes and his porter's shoulders.

The Thenardiess deigned to answer:

"Stockings, if you please. Stockings for my little girls, who have none, worth speaking of, and will soon be going barefooted."

The man looked at Cosette's poor red feet, and continued:

"When will she finish that pair of stockings?"

"It will take her at least three or four good days, the lazy thing."

"And how much might this pair of stockings be worth when it is finished?"

The Thenardiess cast a disdainful glance at him. "At least thirty sous."

"Would you take five francs for them?" said the man.

"Yes, monsieur, if it is your fancy, you can have that pair of stockings for five francs. We can't refuse anything to travelers."

"I will buy that pair of stockings," answered the man, "and," added he, drawing a five-franc piece from his pocket and laying it on the table, "I will pay for them." Then he turned toward Cosette.

"Now your work belongs to me. Play, my child!"

Thenardier approached and silently put the piece in his pocket. The Thenardiess had nothing to reply. She bit her lips, and her face assumed an expression of hatred.

Meanwhile Cosette trembled. She ventured to ask:

"Madame, is it true? May I play?"

"Play!" said the Thenardiess in a terrible voice.

"Thank you, madame," said Cosette. And while her mouth thanked the Thenardiess, all her little soul was thanking the traveler.

Thenardier returned to his drink. His wife whispered in his ear: "What can that yellow man be?"

"I have seen," answered Thenardier, in a commanding tone, "millionaires with coats like that."

Cosette had left her knitting, but she had not moved from her place. She had taken from a little box behind her a few old rags and a little lead sword.

Eponine and Azelma paid no attention to what was going on. They had just performed a very important operation; they had caught the kitten. They had thrown the doll on the floor, and Eponine, the elder, was dressing the kitten in spite of her maiulings and contortions, with a lot of clothes and red and blue rags.

As birds make a nest of anything, children make a doll of no matter what. While Eponine and Azelma were dressing up the cat, Cosette for her part had dressed up the sword. That done, she had laid it upon her arm, and was softly singing it to sleep.

The Thenardiess meanwhile approached the *yellow man.* " My husband is right," thought she, " it may be a rich man." She came and rested her elbow on the table at which he was sitting. " Monsieur," said she.

At this word, *Monsieur,* the man turned. The Thenardiess had called him before only " brave man " or " good man."

" You see, monsieur," she pursued, putting on her sweetest look, which was still more unendurable than her ferocious manner. " I am very willing the child should play; I am not opposed to it; but you see, she is poor; she must work."

" The child is not yours, then? " asked the man.

" Oh, dear! no, monsieur! It is a little pauper

that we have taken in through charity. A sort of imbecile child. We do all we can for her, but we are not rich. We write in vain to her country; for six months we have had no answer."

"Ah!" said the man, and he fell back into his reverie.

Cosette had stopped singing. She had just turned and seen the little Thenardiers' doll, which they had forsaken for the cat and left on the floor a few steps from the kitchen table.

Then she let the bundled-up sword, that only half satisfied her, fall, and ran her eyes slowly around the room. Then, seeing that nobody was looking at her, she crept out from under the table on her hands and knees, darted quickly to the doll and seized it. An instant afterward she was at her place, seated, motionless, only turned in such a way as to keep the doll that she held in her arms in the shadow. The happiness of playing with a doll was so rare to her that it had all the violence of rapture.

This joy lasted for nearly a quarter of an hour. But in spite of Cosette's precautions she did not perceive that one of the doll's feet stuck out and that the fire of the fireplace lighted it up very vividly. This rosy and luminous foot suddenly caught Azelma's eye, and she said to Eponine: "Oh, sister!"

The two little girls stopped, stupefied. Cosette had

dared to take the doll. Eponine got up and without letting go of the cat went to her mother and began to pull at her skirts.

"Let me alone," said the mother; "what do you want?"

"Mother," said the child, "look there." And she pointed at Cosette.

Cosette, wholly absorbed in the ecstasy of her possession, saw and heard nothing else.

The Thenardiess cried with a voice harsh with indignation: "Cosette!"

Cosette shuddered as if the earth had quaked beneath her. She turned around. Then she took the doll and placed it gently on the floor with a kind of veneration mingled with despair. Then without taking away her eyes, she joined her hands, and, what is frightful to tell in a child of that age, she wrung them; then she burst into tears.

Meanwhile the traveler rose. "What is the matter?" said he to the Thenardiess.

"Don't you see?" said the Thenardiess, pointing with her finger to the doll lying at Cosette's feet.

"Well, what is that?" said the man.

"That beggar," answered the Thenardiess, "has dared to touch the children's doll."

"All this noise about that?" said the man. "Well, what if she did play with the doll?"

" She has touched it with her dirty hands! " continued the Thenardiess, " with her horrid hands! "

Here Cosette redoubled her sobs. " Be still," cried the Thenardiess.

The man walked straight to the street door, opened it and went out. As soon as he had gone, the Thenardiess profited by his absence to give Cosette, under the table, a severe kick, which made the child shriek.

The door opened again, and the man reappeared, holding in his hands the fabulous doll of which we have spoken, and which had been the admiration of all the youngsters of the village since morning; he stood it up before Cosette, saying:

" Here, this is for you."

Cosette raised her eyes; she saw the man approach her with that doll as she would have seen the sun approach; she heard those astounding words: " This is for you." She looked at him, she looked at the doll, then she drew back slowly, and went and hid as far as she could under the table in the corner of the room. The Thenardiess, Eponine, Azelma were as so many statues. There was a solemn silence in the whole room.

" Well, Cosette," said the Thenardiess, in a voice which was meant to be sweet, and which was entirely composed of the sour honey of vicious women, " ain't you going to take your doll? "

"HERE, THIS IS FOR YOU."

dier. The man was not asleep, but nothing could arouse him.

Finally Thenardier took off his cap, approached softly and ventured to say: "Is monsieur not going to repose?"

"Yes," said the stranger, "you are right. Where is your stable?"

"Monsieur," said Thenardier, with a smile. "I will conduct monsieur."

He took the candle, the man took his bundle and his staff, and Thenardier led him into a room on the first floor, which was very showy, furnished all in mahogany, with a high-post bedstead and red calico curtains.

The innkeeper retired to his room; his wife was in bed, but not asleep. When she heard her husband's step she turned toward him and said:

"You know that I am going to kick Cosette out of doors to-morrow!"

Thenardier coolly answered: "You are, indeed!" They exchanged no further words, and in a few moments their candle was blown out.

For his part, the traveler had put his staff and bundle in a corner. The host gone, he sat down in an armchair, and remained some time thinking. Then he drew off his shoes, took one of the two candles, blew out the other, pushed open the door, and went

out of the room, looking about him as if he were searching for something.

He passed through a hall, and came to the stairway. There he heard a very soft little sound, which resembled the breathing of a child. Guided by this sound he came to a sort of triangular nook built under the stairs, or rather formed by the staircase itself. There, among all sorts of old baskets and old rubbish, in the dust and among the cobwebs, there was a bed; if a mattress so full of holes as to show the straw, and a covering so full of holes as to show the mattress, can be called a bed. There were no sheets. In this bed Cosette was sleeping.

The man approachd and looked at her. Cosette was sleeping soundly; she was dressed. In the winter she did not undress on account of the cold. She held the doll clasped in her arms; its large open eyes shone in the obscurity. From time to time she heaved a deep sigh, as if she were about to wake, and she hugged the doll almost convulsively. There was only one of her wooden shoes at the side of her bed.

An open door near Cosette's nook disclosed a large dark room. The stranger entered. At the farther end, through a glass window, he perceived two little beds with very white spreads. They were those of Azelma and Eponine. Half hidden behind those beds was a willow cradle without curtains, in which the

little boy who had cried all the evening was sleeping. The stranger conjectured that this room communicated with that of the Thenardiers. He was about to withdraw when his eyes fell upon the fireplace, one of those huge tavern fireplaces where there is always so little fire, when there is a fire, and which are so cold to look upon. In this one there was no fire, there were not even any ashes.

What there was, however, attracted the traveler's attention. It was two little children's shoes, of coquettish shape and of different sizes. The traveler remembered the graceful and immemorial custom of children putting their shoes in the fireplace on Christmas night to wait there in the darkness in expectation of some shining gift from their good fairy. Eponine and Azelma had taken good care not to forget this, and each had put one of her shoes in the fireplace.

The traveler bent over them. The fairy — that is to say, the mother — had already made her visit, and shining in each shoe was a beautiful new ten-sou piece.

The man rose up and was on the point of going away, when he perceived farther along, by itself, in the darkest corner of the fireplace, another object. He looked and recognized a shoe, a horrid wooden shoe of the clumsiest sort, half broken and covered with ashes and dried mud. It was Cosette's shoe. Cosette with that touching confidence of childhood, which can always be

deceived without ever being discouraged, had also placed her shoe in the fireplace. What a sublime and sweet thing is hope in a child who has never known anything but despair!

There was nothing in this wooden shoe. The stranger fumbled in his waistcoat, bent over and dropped into Cosette's shoe a gold louis. Then he went back to his room with stealthy tread.

On the following morning, at least two hours before day, Thenardier, seated at a table, a candle by his side, with pen in hand, was making out the bill of the traveler in the yellow coat. His wife was standing, half bent, over him, following him with her eyes. After a good quarter of an hour and some erasures it was finished.

"Twenty-three francs!" exclaimed the woman, with an enthusiasm which was mingled with some hesitation.

Thenardier lighted his pipe and answered between two puffs: "You'll give the bill to the man." Then he went out. He was scarcely out of the room when the traveler came in. Thenardier reappeared immediately behind him, and remained motionless in the half-open door, visible only to his wife. The yellow man carried his staff and bundle in his hand.

"Up so soon!" said the Thenardiess; "is monsieur going to leave us already?"

"Yes, madame, I am going away. What do I owe?"

The Thenardiess, without answering, handed him the folded bill. The man unfolded the paper and looked at it; but his thoughts were evidently elsewhere.

"Madame," replied he, "do you do a good business here?"

"So, so, monsieur," answered the Thenardiess, stupefied at seeing no other explosion. She continued in a mournful and lamenting strain:

"Oh! monsieur, the times are very hard, and then we have so few rich people around here! If we only had rich travelers now and then, like monsieur! We have so many expenses. Why, that little girl eats us out of house and home."

"What little girl?"

"Why, the little girl you know! Cosette! You see, monsieur, we don't ask charity, but we are not able to give it. We make nothing, and have a great deal to pay. And then I have my own girls. I have nothing to spend on other people's children."

The man replied in a voice which he endeavored to render indifferent, and in which there was a slight tremulousness:

"Suppose you were relieved of her?"

"Who? Cosette?"

"Yes."

The red and violent face of the woman became illumined with a hideous expression.

" Ah, monsieur! my good monsieur! take her, keep her, take her away, carry her off, sugar her, stuff her, and be blessed by the holy virgin and all the saints in paradise! "

" Agreed."

" Really! you will take her away? "

" I will."

" Immediately? "

" Immediately. Call the child."

" Cosette! " cried the Thenardiess.

" In the meantime," continued the man, " I will pay my bill. How much is it? "

He cast a glance at the bill, and could not repress a movement of surprise.

" Twenty-three francs? "

The Thenardiess had had time to prepare herself for the shock. She replied with assurance:

" Yes, of course, monsieur! it is twenty-three francs."

The stranger placed five five-franc pieces upon the table. " Go for the little girl," said he.

At this moment Thenardier advanced into the middle of the room and said:

" Monsieur owes twenty-six sous."

" Twenty-six sous! " exclaimed the woman.

"Twenty sous for the room," continued Thenardier coldly, "and six for supper. As to the little girl, I must have some talk with monsieur about that. Leave us, wife."

As soon as they were alone Thenardier offered the traveler a chair. The traveler sat down, but Thenardier remained standing and his face assumed a singular expression of good-nature and simplicity.

"Monsieur," said he, "listen; I must say that I adore this child."

The stranger looked at him steadily.

"What child?"

Thenardier continued: "How strangely we become attached! What is all this silver! Take back your money. This child I adore."

"Who is that?" asked the stranger.

"Oh, our little Cosette! And you wish to take her away from us? Indeed I speak frankly, as true as you are an honorable man I cannot consent to it. I should miss her. I have had her since she was very small. It is true she costs us money; it is true she has her faults; it is true we are not rich. But we must do something for God. She has neither father nor mother; I have brought her up. I have bread enough for her and for myself. In fact I must keep this child. You understand we have affections; I am a good beast myself. I do not reason, I love this little girl; my wife

is hasty, but she loves her also. You see she is like our own child."

The stranger was looking at him steadily all the while. He continued:

"Pardon me, excuse me, monsieur, but one does not give his child like that to a traveler. Isn't it true that I am right? After that I don't say — you are rich and have the appearance of a very fine man — if it is for her advantage — but I must know about it. I do not know even your name. If you should take her away I should say, alas for the little Cosette, where has she gone? I must, at least, see some poor rag of paper, a bit of passport, something."

The stranger without removing from him this gaze, which went, so to speak, to the bottom of his conscience, answered in a severe and firm tone:

"Monsieur Thenardier, people do not take a passport to come five leagues from Paris. If I take Cosette, I take her, that is all. You will not know my name, you will not know my abode, you will not know where she goes, and my intention is that she shall never see you again in her life. Do you agree to that? Yes, or no?"

As demons and genii recognize by certain signs the presence of a superior god, Thenardier comprehended that he had to deal with one who was very powerful. Thenardier was one of those men who comprehend a

situation at a glance. He decided that this was the moment to advance, straightforward and swiftly. He did what great captains do at that decisive instant which they alone can recognize; he unmasked his battery at once. "Monsieur," said he, "I must have fifteen hundred francs."

The stranger took from his side pocket an old black leather pocket-book, opened it and drew forth three bank bills, which he placed upon the table. He then rested his large thumb on these bills and said to the tavern-keeper:

"Bring Cosette."

While this was going on what was Cosette doing?

Cosette, as soon as she awoke, had run to her wooden shoe. She had found the gold piece in it. Cosette was dazzled. Her destiny began to intoxicate her. She did not know that it was a piece of gold; she had never seen one before; she hastily concealed it in her pocket as if she had stolen it. Nevertheless, she felt it boded good to her. She divined whence the gift came, but she experienced a joy filled with awe. Such magnificent and beautiful things seemed unreal to her.

Since she had met this good man in the wood it seemed as though all things were changed about her. Cosette, less happy than the smallest swallow of the sky, had never known what it is to take refuge under a mother's wing. For five years, that is to say, as far

back as she could remember, the poor child had shivered and shuddered. She had always been naked under the biting north wind of misfortune, and now it seemed to her that she was clothed. Before her soul was cold, now it was warm. Cosette was no longer afraid of the Thenardiers; she was no longer alone; she had somebody to look to.

She hurriedly set herself to her morning task. While sweeping the stairs she stopped and stood there motionless, forgetting her broom and the whole world besides, occupied in looking at the shining louis at the bottom of her pocket. It was in one of these reveries that the Thenardiess found her. At the command of her husband she had gone to look for her. Wonderful to tell, she did not give her a slap nor even call her a hard name.

"Cosette," she said, almost gently, "come, quick."

An instant after Cosette entered the bar-room. The stranger took the bundle he had brought and untied it. This bundle contained a little woolen frock, an apron, a coarse cotton undergarment, a petticoat, a scarf, woolen stockings, and shoes — a complete dress for a girl of seven years. It was all in black.

"My child," said the man, "take this and go and dress yourself, quick."

The day was breaking when those of the inhabitants of Montfermeil who were beginning to open their doors

COSETTE WAS GOING AWAY.

saw pass on the road to Paris a poorly clad good man leading a little girl dressed in mourning, who had a pink doll in her arms.

It was the stranger and Cosette. No one recognized the man; as Cosette was not now in tatters, few recognized her.

Cosette was going away. With whom? She was ignorant. Where? She knew not. All she understood was that she was leaving behind the Thenardier chop-house. Nobody had thought of bidding her good-by, nor had she thought of bidding good-by to anybody. She went out from that house hated and hating.

Poor, gentle being, whose heart had only been crushed hitherto! Cosette walked seriously along, opening her large eyes and looking at the sky. She had put her louis in the pocket of her new apron. From time to time she bent over and cast a glance at it and then looked at the good man. She felt somewhat as if she were near God.

LOST IN LONDON

(From "Dombey and Son")

CHARLES DICKENS

CHARLES DICKENS

CHARLES DICKENS, an English novelist and humorist, was born at Portsmouth in 1812. His parents were very poor and Charles was sickly, so his childhood was not a happy one, but his sunny disposition helped him over the hard places.

When he was nine years old, the family moved to London, and not long after the father was thrown into prison because he could not pay his debts. Charles was given a position in a blacking establishment, where he was thrown among rough men and boys, and to the delicate, sensitive boy, this was a most bitter experience. His one joy was visiting his father and the family in the Marshalsea prison on Sunday.

After two long years of this hard life, times grew better for the family, and Charles was allowed to complete his education. At the age of nineteen, he began his career as a newspaper reporter, and from this obscure position he rose to fame and fortune by his talents and energy.

His first stories appeared in a monthly magazine and were signed "Boz." The "Pickwick Papers" next appeared, and these made him famous. More

books followed, and everything he wrote was eagerly read by the English people, who laughed and cried over his books.

He visited America and on his return wrote "Martin Chuzzlewit," a book which is not very popular in the United States, because of some sarcastic things he says about Americans.

His public readings, in which he read from his own books, were delightful, for he was a natural dramatist, and he had a most winning personality.

His life was one whirl of activity, and his death was probably hastened by overwork. While working on "Edwin Drood," in 1870, he died very suddenly, and he is buried among England's honored dead in Westminster Abbey.

Some of his books are "David Copperfield," "The Old Curiosity Shop," "Nicholas Nickleby," "Little Dorrit," "Bleak House" and "Dombey and Son." The selection "Lost in London" is taken from this last-named book, while "Little Nell and Mrs. Jarley" is part of his sad and beautiful story, "The Old Curiosity Shop."

LOST IN LONDON

SURPRISES, like misfortunes, rarely come alone. The astonished Susan Nipper and her two young charges, Master Paul and Miss Florence Dombey, were rescued by the bystanders from under the very wheels of a passing carriage before they knew what had happened; and at that moment (it was market day) a thundering alarm of "Mad Bull!" was raised.

With a wild confusion before her, of people running up and down, and shouting, and wheels running over them, and mad bulls coming up, and the nurse in the midst of all these dangers being torn to pieces, Florence screamed and ran. She ran till she was exhausted, urging Susan to do the same; and then, stopping and wringing her hands as she remembered they had left Richards, the other nurse behind, found, with a sensation of terror not to be described, that she was quite alone.

"Susan! Susan!" cried Florence, clapping her hands in the very ecstasy of her alarm. "Oh, where are they! where are they!"

"Where are they?" said an old woman, coming

hobbling across as fast as she could from the opposite side of the way. "Why did you run away from 'em?"

"I was frightened," answered Florence. "I didn't know what I did. I thought they were with me. Where are they?"

The old woman took her by the wrist, and said, "I'll show you."

She was a very ugly old woman, with red rims round her eyes, and a mouth that mumbled and chattered of itself when she was not speaking. She was miserably dressed and carried some skins over her arm. She seemed to have followed Florence some little way at all events, for she had lost her breath; and this made her uglier still, as she stood trying to regain it: working her shrivelled yellow face and throat into all sorts of contortions.

Florence was afraid of her, and looked, hesitating, up the street, of which she had almost reached the bottom. It was a solitary place — more a back road than a street — and there was no one in it but herself and the old woman.

"You needn't be frightened now," said the old woman, still holding her tight. "Come along with me."

"I — I don't know you. What's your name?" asked Florence.

THE OLD WOMAN TOOK HER BY THE WRIST AND, SAID, "I'LL SHOW YOU."

"Mrs. Brown," said the old woman. "Good Mrs. Brown."

"Are they near here?" asked Florence, beginning to be led away.

"Susan a'n't far off," said Good Mrs. Brown; "and the others are close to her."

"Is anybody hurt?" cried Florence.

"Not a bit of it," said Good Mrs. Brown.

The child shed tears of delight on hearing this, and accompanied the old woman willingly; though she could not help glancing at her face as they went along — particularly at that industrious mouth — and wondering whether Bad Mrs. Brown, if there were such a person, was at all like her.

They had not gone far, but had gone by some very uncomfortable places, such as brick-fields and tile-yards, when the old woman turned down a dirty lane, where the mud lay in deep black ruts in the middle of the road. She stopped before a shabby little house, as closely shut up as a house that was full of cracks and crevices could be. Opening the door with a key she took out of her bonnet, she pushed the child before her into a back room, where there was a great heap of rags of different colours lying on the floor; a heap of bones, and a heap of sifted dust or cinders; but there was no furniture at all, and the walls and ceilings were quite black.

The child became so terrified that she was stricken speechless, and looked as though about to swoon.

"Now don't be a young mule," said Good Mrs. Brown, reviving her with a shake. "I'm not a-going to hurt you. Sit upon the rags."

Florence obeyed her, holding out her folded hands, in mute supplication.

"I'm not a-going to keep you, even, above an hour," said Mrs. Brown. "D'ye understand what I say?"

The child answered with great difficulty, "Yes."

"Then," said Good Mrs. Brown, taking her own seat on the bones, "don't vex me. If you don't, I tell you I won't hurt you. But if you do, I'll kill you. I could have you killed at any time — even if you was in your own bed at home. Now let's know who you are, and what you are, and all about it."

The old woman's threats and promises, the dread of giving her offence, and the habit, unusual to a child, but almost natural to Florence now, of being quiet and repressing what she felt and feared and hoped, enabled her to do this bidding, and to tell her little history or what she knew of it. Mrs. Brown listened attentively until she had finished.

"So your name's Dombey, eh?" said Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, ma'am."

"I want that pretty frock, Miss Dombey," said Good Mrs. Brown, "and that little bonnet, and a petti-

coat or two, and anything else you can spare. Come! Take 'em off."

Florence obeyed as fast as her trembling hands would allow; keeping, all the while, a frightened eye on Mrs. Brown. When she had divested herself of all the articles of apparel mentioned by that lady, Mrs. B. examined them at leisure, and seemed tolerably well satisfied with their quality and value.

"Humph!" she said, running her eyes over the child's slight figure, "I don't see anything else — except the shoes. I must have the shoes, Miss Dombey."

Poor little Florence took them off with equal alacrity, only too glad to have any more means of conciliation about her. The old woman then produced some wretched substitutes from the bottom of the heap of rags, which she turned up for that purpose; together with a girl's cloak, quite worn out and very old; and the crushed remains of a bonnet that had probably been picked up from some ditch. In this dainty raiment, she instructed Florence to dress herself; and as such preparation seemed a prelude to her release, the child complied with increased readiness, if possible.

In hurriedly putting on the bonnet, if that may be called a bonnet which was more like a pad to carry loads on, she caught it in her hair which grew luxuriantly, and could not immediately disentangle it. Good

Mrs. Brown whipped out a large pair of scissors and fell into an unaccountable state of excitement.

"Why couldn't you let me be," said Mrs. Brown, "when I was contented. You little fool!"

"I beg your pardon. I don't know what I have done," panted Florence. "I couldn't help it."

"Couldn't help it!" cried Mrs. Brown. "How do you expect I can help it? Why, Lord!" said the old woman, ruffling her curls with a furious pleasure, "anybody but me would have had 'em off first of all."

Florence was so relieved to find that it was only her hair and not her head which Mrs. Brown coveted, that she offered no resistance or entreaty, and merely raised her mild eyes towards the face of that good soul.

"If I hadn't once had a gal of my own — beyond seas now — that was proud of her hair," said Mrs. Brown, "I'd have had every lock of it. She's far away, she's far away! Oho! Oho!"

Mrs. Brown's was not a melodious cry, but, accompanied with a wild tossing up of her lean arms, it was full of passionate grief, and thrilled to the heart of Florence, whom it frightened more than ever. It had its part, perhaps, in saving her curls; for Mrs. Brown, after hovering about her with the scissors for some moments, like a new kind of butterfly, bade her hide them under the bonnet and let no trace of them escape

to tempt her. Having accomplished this victory over herself, Mrs. Brown resumed her seat on the bones, and smoked a very short black pipe, mowing and mumbling all the time, as if she were eating the stem.

When the pipe was smoked out, she gave the child a rabbit-skin to carry, that she might appear more like her ordinary companion, and told her that she was now going to lead her to a public street whence she could inquire her way to her friends. But she cautioned her, with threats of summary and deadly vengeance in case of disobedience, not to talk to strangers, nor to repair to her own home (which may have been too near for Mrs. Brown's convenience), but to her father's office in the city; also to wait at the street corner where she would be left, until the clock struck three.

At length Mrs. Brown, issuing forth, conducted her changed and ragged little friend through a labyrinth of narrow streets and lanes and alleys, which emerged after a long time, upon a stable yard, with a gateway at the end, whence the roar of a great thoroughfare made itself audible.

Pointing out this gateway, and informing Florence that when the clock struck three she was to go to the left, Mrs. Brown, after making a parting grasp at her hair which seemed involuntary and quite beyond her own control, told her she knew what to do, and bade her go and do it; remembering that she was watched.

With a lighter heart, but still sore afraid, Florence felt herself released, and tripped off to the corner. When she reached it, she looked back and saw the head of Good Mrs. Brown peeping out of the low wooden passage where she had issued her parting injunctions; likewise the fist of Good Mrs. Brown shaking towards her. But though she often looked back afterwards — every minute, at least, in her nervous recollection of the old woman — she could not see her again.

Florence remained there, looking at the bustle in the street, and more and more bewildered by it; and in the meanwhile the clocks appeared to have made up their minds never to strike three any more. At last the steeples rang out three o'clock; there was one close by, so she couldn't be mistaken; and — after often looking over her shoulder and often going a little way, and as often coming back again, lest the all-powerful spies of Mrs. Brown should take offence — she hurried off, as fast as she could in her slipshod shoes, holding the rabbit-skin tight in her hand.

All that she knew of her father's offices was that they belonged to Dombey and Son, and that that was a great power belonging to the city. So she could only ask the way to Dombey and Son's in the city; and as she generally made inquiry of children — being afraid to ask grown people — she got very little satisfaction indeed. But by dint of asking her way to the city

after a while, and dropping the rest of her inquiry for the present, she really did advance, by slow degrees, towards the heart of that great region which is governed by the terrible Lord Mayor.

Tired of walking, repulsed and pushed about, stunned by the noise and confusion, anxious for her brother and the nurses, terrified by what she had undergone, and the prospect of encountering her angry father in such an altered state, perplexed and frightened alike by what had passed, and what was passing, and what was yet before her, Florence went upon her weary way with tearful eyes, and once or twice could not help stopping to ease her bursting heart by crying bitterly. But few people noticed her at these times, in the garb she wore; or if they did, believed that she was tutored to excite compassion.

It was full two hours later in the afternoon than when she had started on this strange adventure, when, escaping from the clash and clangor of a narrow street full of carts and waggons, she peeped into a kind of wharf or landing-place, upon the river side, where there were a great many packages, casks, and boxes, strewn about; a large pair of wooden scales; and a little wooden house on wheels, outside of which, looking at the neighbouring masts and boats, a stout man stood whistling, with his pen behind his ear, and his hands in his pockets, as if his day's work were nearly done.

"Now then!" said this man, happening to turn round. "We haven't got anything for you, little girl. Be off!"

"If you please, is this the city?" asked the trembling daughter of the Dombeys.

"Ah! It's the city. You know that well enough, I dare say. Be off! We haven't got anything for you."

"I don't want anything, thank you," was the timid answer. "Except to know the way to Dombey and Son's."

The man, who had been strolling carelessly towards her, seemed surprised by this reply, and looking attentively in her face, rejoined:

"Why, what can *you* want with Dombey and Son's?"

"To know the way there, if you please."

The man looked at her yet more curiously, and rubbed the back of his head so hard in his wonderment that he knocked his own hat off.

"Joe!" he called to another man — a labourer — as he picked it up and put it on again.

"Joe it is!" said Joe.

"Where's that young spark of Dombey's who's been watching the shipment of them goods?"

"Just gone, by the t'other gate," said Joe.

"Call him back a minute.

Joe ran up an archway, bawling as he went, and very soon returned with a blithe-looking boy.

"You're Dombey's jockey, an't you?" said the first man.

"I'm in Dombey's House, Mr. Clark," returned the boy.

"Look'ye here, then," said Mr. Clark.

Obedient to the indication of Mr. Clark's hand, the boy approached towards Florence, wondering, as well he might, what he had to do with her. But she, who had heard what passed, and who, besides the relief of so suddenly considering herself safe and at her journey's end, felt reassured beyond all measure by his lively youthful face and manner, ran eagerly up to him, leaving one of the slipshod shoes upon the ground, and caught his hand in both of hers.

"I am lost, if you please!" said Florence.

"Lost!" cried the boy.

"Yes, I was lost this morning, a long way from here — and I have had my clothes taken away, since — and I am not dressed in my own now — and my name is Florence Dombey, my little brother's only sister — and, oh dear, dear, take care of me, if you please!" sobbed Florence, giving full vent to the childish feelings she had so long suppressed, and bursting into tears. At the same time her miserable bonnet falling off, her hair came tumbling down about her face; mov-

ing to speechless admiration and commiseration, young Walter, nephew of Solomon Gills, Ship's Instrument-maker in general.

Mr. Clark stood rapt in amazement; observing under his breath, "*I* never saw such a start on *this* wharf before." Walter picked up the shoe, and put it on the little foot as the Prince in the story might have fitted Cinderella's slipper on. He hung the rabbit-skin over his left arm; gave the right to Florence; and felt not to say like Richard Whittington — that is a tame comparison — but like Saint George of England, with the dragon lying dead before him.

"Don't cry, Miss Dombey," said Walter, in a transport of enthusiasm. . . . "You are as safe now as if you were guarded by a whole boat's crew of picked men from a man-of-war. Oh, don't cry."

"I won't cry any more," said Florence. "I am only crying for joy."

"Crying for joy!" thought Walter, "and I'm the cause of it. Come along, Miss Dombey. There's the other shoe off now! Take mine, Miss Dombey."

"No, no, no," said Florence, checking him in the act of impetuously pulling off his own. "These do better. These do very well."

"Why, to be be sure," said Walter, glancing at her feet, "mine are a mile too large. What am I thinking about. You never could walk in *mine!* Come along,

Miss Dombey. Let me see the villain who will dare molest you now."

So Walter, looking immensely fierce, led off Florence, looking very happy; and they went arm in arm along the streets, perfectly indifferent to any astonishment that their appearance might or did excite by the way.

It was growing dark and foggy, and beginning to rain too; but they cared nothing for this; being both wholly absorbed in the late adventures of Florence, which she related with the innocent good faith and confidence of her years. . . .

"Have we far to go?" asked Florence at last, lifting her eyes to her companion's face.

"Ah! By the bye," said Walter, stopping, "let me see; where are we? Oh! I know. But the offices are shut up now, Miss Dombey. There's nobody there. Mr. Dombey has gone home long ago. I suppose we must go home too? or, stay. Suppose I take you to my uncle's, where I live — it's very near here — and go to your house in a coach to tell them you are safe, and bring you back some clothes. Won't that be best?"

"I think so," answered Florence.

* * * * *

"Holloa, Uncle Sol!" cried Walter, bursting into the shop, and speaking incoherently and out of

breath, from that time forth, for the rest of the evening. "Here's a wonderful adventure! Here's Mr. Dombey's daughter lost in the streets, and robbed of her clothes by an old witch of a woman — found by me — brought home to our parlour to rest — look here!"

"Good Heaven!" said Uncle Sol, starting back. "It can't be! Well, I — "

"No, nor anybody else," said Walter, anticipating the rest. "Nobody would, nobody could, you know. Here! just help me lift the little sofa near the fire, will you, Uncle Sol — take care of the plates — cut some dinner for her, will you, uncle — throw those shoes under the grate, Miss Florence — put your feet on the fender to dry — how damp they are — here's an adventure, uncle, eh? — God bless my soul, how hot I am!"

Solomon Gills was quite as hot, by sympathy, and in excessive bewilderment. He patted Florence's head, pressed her to eat, pressed her to drink, rubbed the soles of her feet with his pocket handkerchief heated at the fire, followed his locomotive nephew with his eyes, and ears, and had no clear perception of anything except that he was being constantly knocked against and tumbled over by that excited young gentleman, as he darted about the room attempting to accomplish twenty things at once, and doing nothing at all.

"Here, wait a minute, uncle," he continued, catching up a candle, "till I run upstairs, and get another jacket on, and then I'll be off. I say, uncle, isn't this an adventure?"

"My dear boy," said Solomon, who, with his spectacles on his forehead, was incessantly oscillating between Florence on the sofa and his nephew in all parts of the parlor, "it's the most extraordinary —"

"No, but do, uncle, please — do, Miss Florence — dinner, you know, uncle."

"Yes, yes, yes," cried Solomon, cutting instantly into a leg of mutton, as if he were catering for a giant. "I'll take care of her, Wally! I understand. Pretty dear! Famished, of course. You go and get ready. Lord bless me!"

Walter was not very long in mounting to his lofty garret and descending from it, but in the meantime Florence, overcome by fatigue, had sunk into a doze before the fire. The short interval of quiet, though only a few minutes in duration, enabled Solomon Gills so far to collect his wits as to make some little arrangements for her comfort, and to darken the room, and to screen her from the blaze. Thus, when the boy returned, she was sleeping peacefully.

"That's capital!" he whispered, giving Solomon such a hug that it squeezed a new expression into his face. "Now I'm off. I'll just take a crust of bread

with me, for I'm very hungry — and — don't wake her, Uncle Sol."

"No, no," said Solomon. "Pretty child."

"Pretty, indeed!" cried Walter. "*I* never saw such a face, Uncle Sol. Now I'm off."

* * * * *

Solomon Gills, with no appetite for dinner, sat on the opposite side of the fire, watching Florence in her slumber, building a great many airy castles of the most fantastic architecture; and looking in the dim shade like a magician disguised in a Welsh wig and a suit of coffee color, who held the child in an enchanted sleep.

In the meantime, Walter proceeded towards Mr. Dombey's house at a pace seldom achieved by a hack horse from the stand; and yet with his head out of the window every two or three minutes, in impatient remonstrance with the driver. Arriving at his journey's end, he leaped out, and breathlessly announcing his errand to the servant, followed him straight into the library, where there was a great confusion of tongues, and where Mr. Dombey, his sister, and Miss Tox, Richards, and Nipper, were all congregated together.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, sir," said Walter, rushing up to him, "but I'm happy to say it's all right, sir. Miss Dombey's found!"

The boy with his open face, and sparkling eyes,

panting with pleasure and excitement, was wonderfully opposed to Mr. Dombey, as he sat confronting him in his library chair.

"I told you, Louisa, that she would certainly be found," said Mr. Dombey, looking slightly over his shoulder at that lady, who wept in company with Miss Tox. "Let the servants know that no further steps are necessary. This boy who brings the information, is young Gay, from the office. How was my daughter found, sir? I know how she was lost." Here he looked majestically at Richards. "But how was she found? Who found her?"

"Why, I believe *I* found Miss Dombey, sir," said Walter modestly. Then he explained as well as he could in his breathless state, how he had found her and why he had come alone.

"You hear this, girl?" said Mr. Dombey sternly to the black-eyed Susan Nipper. "Take what is necessary, and return immediately with this young man to fetch Miss Florence home. Gay, you will be rewarded to-morrow."

"Oh! thank you, sir," said Walter. "You are very kind. I'm sure I was not thinking of any reward, sir."

"You are a boy," said Mr. Dombey, suddenly and almost fiercely; "and what you think of, or affect to think of, is of little consequence. You have done well,

sir. Don't undo it, Louisa, please to give the lad some wine."

Walter rode back to his uncle's with Susan Nipper, and there they found that Florence, much refreshed by sleep, had dined, and greatly improved the acquaintance of Solomon Gills, with whom she was on terms of perfect confidence and ease. The black-eyed (who had cried so much that she might now be called the red-eyed, and who was very silent and depressed) caught her in her arms without a word of contradiction or reproach, and made a very hysterical meeting of it. Then converting the parlour, for the nonce, into a private tyring room, she dressed her, with great care, in proper clothes; and presently led her forth. . . .

"Good night!" said Florence, running up to Solomon. "You have been very good to me."

Old Sol was quite delighted, and kissed her like her grandfather.

"Good night, Walter! Goodbye!" said Florence.

"Goodbye!" said Walter, giving both his hands.

"I'll never forget you," pursued Florence. "No! indeed I never will. Goodbye, Walter!"

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

GEORGE ELIOT

GEORGE ELIOT

MARY ANN EVANS — better known to the world by her pen-name of George Eliot — was born in Warwickshire in 1819. Her family had for generations lived in the farming district of the English midlands, so faithfully pictured in her novels. Her father was a carpenter and builder by trade, but at the time of the writer's birth was in charge of a large estate belonging to a gentleman of Warwickshire.

On a farm on this estate Mary Ann Evans — or, as she preferred to call herself, Marian Evans — spent the first twenty-one years of her life. She saw little of the outside world: her education was received at the schools of Nuneaton and Coventry, and after her mother's death she assumed, at the age of sixteen, all the duties of housekeeper on the farm. She found time for considerable reading, however, and she continued her German and music lessons under masters who went to the farm from Coventry.

When Marian Evans was twenty-one her father moved to Coventry, and her opportunities for improving her mind increased. After his death in 1849 she left her home, and, from then on, spent much time

in travel, visiting Switzerland, Spain and Italy, and spending several summers in Germany. Most of her winters were passed in London, where she was the center of a circle of well-known writers. She was a woman of strong character, and very unconventional. In 1880 she became the wife of Mr. Cross, one of her literary friends, but her married life lasted only a few months, as she died in the same year.

It is said that few novelists have put so much of themselves and their personal experience into their work as has George Eliot. The character of little Maggie Tulliver in " The Mill on the Floss " is almost an exact picture of the author herself as a child, while in Tom we have her elder brother, Isaac. The Dodsons are closely patterned after her own relatives, and in other novels she has sketched for us her father and various other members of the family circle.

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

I

BROTHER AND SISTER

"WHAT I want, you know," said Mr. Tulliver, master of Dorlcote Mill, "what I want is to give Tom a good eddication; an eddication as 'll be a bread to him. That was what I was thinking of when I gave notice for him to leave the academy. I mean to put him to a downright good school. The two years at th' academy 'ud ha' done well enough, if I'd meant to make a miller and farmer of him, for he's had a sight more schoolin' nor I ever got. But I should like Tom to be a bit of a scholard, so as he might be up to the tricks o' these fellows as talk fine and write with a flourish."

Mr. Tulliver was speaking to his wife, a blond, comely woman in a fan-shaped cap.

"But," continued Mr. Tulliver, after a pause, "what I'm a bit afraid on is, as Tom hasn't got the right sort o' brains for a smart fellow. I doubt he's a bit slowish. He takes after your family, Bessy."

"Yes, that he does," said Mrs. Tulliver, accepting the last proposition entirely on its own merits; "he's wonderful for liking a deal o' salt in his broth. That was my brother's way, and my father's before him."

"It seems a pity, though," said Mr. Tulliver, "as the lad should take after the mother's side i'stead o' the little wench. The little un takes after my side, now: she's twice as 'cute as Tom. Too 'cute for a woman, I'm afraid. It's no mischief much while she's a little un, but an over-'cute woman's no better nor a long-tailed sheep — she'll fetch none the bigger price for that."

"Yes, it is a mischief while she's a little un, Mr. Tulliver, for it all runs to naughtiness. How to keep her in a clean pinafore two hours together passes my cunning. An' now you put me i' mind," continued Mrs. Tulliver, rising and going to the window, "I don't know where she is now, an' its pretty nigh tea-time. Ah, I thought so,— wanderin' up an' down by the water, like a wild thing; she'll tumble in some day."

Mrs. Tulliver rapped the window sharply, beckoned, and shook her head,— a process which she repeated more than once before she returned to her chair.

"You talk o' 'cuteness, Mr. Tulliver," she observed as she sat down, "but I'm sure the child's half an idiot i' some things; for if I send her upstairs to fetch

anything, she forgets what she's gone for, an' perhaps 'ull sit down on the floor i' the sunshine an' plait her hair an' sing to herself like a Bedlam creatur, all the while I'm waiting for her down-stairs. That niver run i' my family, thank God, no more nor a brown skin as makes her look like a mulatter. I don't like to fly i' the face o' Providence, but it seems hard as I should have but one gell, an' her so comical."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said Mr. Tulliver; "she's a straight, black-eyed wench as anybody need wish to see. I don't know i' what she's behind other folks's children; and she can read almost as well as the parson."

"But her hair won't curl all I can do with it, and she's so franzy about having it put i' paper, and I've such work as never was to make her stand and have it pinched with th' irons."

"Cut it off — cut it off short," said the father, rashly.

"How can you talk so, Mr. Tulliver? She's too big a gell — gone nine, and tall of her age — to have her hair cut short; an' there's her cousin Lucy's got a row o' curls round her head, an' not a hair out o' place. It seems hard as my sister Deane should have that pretty child; I'm sure Lucy takes more after me nor my own child does. Maggie, Maggie," continued the mother, in a tone of half-coaxing fretfulness, as this

small mistake of nature entered the room, "where's the use o' my telling you to keep away from the water? You'll tumble in and be drownded some day, an' then you'll be sorry you didn't do as mother told you."

Maggie's hair, as she threw off her bonnet, painfully confirmed her mother's accusation. Mrs. Tulliver, desiring her daughter to have a curled crop, "like other folks's children," had had it cut too short in front to be pushed behind the ears; and as it was usually straight an hour after it had been taken out of paper, Maggie was incessantly tossing her head to keep the dark heavy locks out of her gleaming black eyes,— an action which gave her very much the air of a small Shetland pony.

"Oh dear, oh dear, Maggie, what are you thinkin' of, to throw your bonnet down there? Take it upstairs, there's a good gell, an' let your hair be brushed, an' put your other pinafore on, an' change your shoes, — do, for shame; an' come an' go on with your patchwork, like a little lady."

"Oh, mother," said Maggie in a vehemently cross tone, "I don't *want* to do my patchwork."

"What! not your pretty patchwork, to make a counterpane for your Aunt Glegg? "

"It's foolish work," said Maggie, with a toss of her mane,— "tearing things to pieces to sew 'em together

again. And I don't want to do anything for my Aunt Glegg — I don't like her."

Exit Maggie, dragging her bonnet by the string, while Mr. Tulliver laughs audibly.

* * * * *

It was a heavy disappointment to Maggie that she was not allowed to go with her father in the gig when he went to fetch Tom home from the academy; but the morning was too wet, Mrs. Tulliver said, for a little girl to go out in her best bonnet. Maggie took the opposite view very strongly, and it was a direct consequence of this difference of opinion that when her mother was in the act of brushing out the reluctant black crop Maggie suddenly rushed from under her hands and dipped her head in a basin of water standing near — in the vindictive determination that there should be no more chance of curls that day.

"Maggie, Maggie!" exclaimed Mrs. Tulliver, sitting stout and helpless with the brushes in her lap, "what is to become of you if you're so naughty? I'll tell your Aunt Glegg and your Aunt Pullet when they come next week, and they'll never love you any more. Oh dear, oh dear! look at your clean pinafore, wet from top to bottom. Folks 'ull think it's a judgment on me as I've got such a child,— they'll think I've done summat wicked."

Before this remonstrance was finished, Maggie was

already out of hearing, making her way towards the great attic that ran under the old high-pitched roof, shaking the water from her black locks as she ran, like a Skye terrier escaped from his bath. This attic was Maggie's favorite retreat on a wet day, when the weather was not too cold; here she fretted out all her ill-humors, and talked aloud to the worm-eaten floors and the worm-eaten shelves, and the dark rafters festooned with cobwebs; and here she kept a Fetich which she punished for all her misfortunes. This was the trunk of a large wooden doll, which once stared with the roundest of eyes above the reddest of cheeks; but was now entirely defaced by a long career of vicarious suffering. . . . She soothed herself by alternately grinding and beating the wooden head against the rough brick of the great chimneys that made two square pillars supporting the roof. That was what she did this morning on reaching the attic, sobbing all the while with a passion that expelled every other form of consciousness,— even the memory of the grievance that had caused it.

As at last the sobs were getting quieter, and the grinding less fierce, a sudden beam of sunshine, falling through the wire lattice across the worm-eaten shelves, made her throw away the Fetich and run to the window. The sun was really breaking out; the sound of the mill seemed cheerful again; the granary doors

were open; and there was Yap, the queer white-and-brown terrier, with one ear turned back, trotting about and sniffing vaguely, as if he were in search of a companion. It was irresistible. Maggie tossed her hair back and ran down-stairs, seized her bonnet without putting it on, peeped, and then dashed along the passage lest she should encounter her mother, and was quickly out in the yard, whirling round like a Pythoness, and singing as she whirled, "Yap, Yap, Tom's coming home!" while Yap danced and barked round her, as much as to say, if there was any noise wanted he was the dog for it.

"Hegh, hegh, Miss! you'll make yourself giddy, an' tumble down i' the dirt," said Luke, the head miller, a tall broad-shouldered man of forty, black-eyed and black-haired, subdued by a general mealiness, like an auricula.

Maggie paused in her whirling and said, staggering a little, "Oh no, it doesn't make me giddy, Luke; may I go into the mill with you?"

Maggie loved to linger in the great spaces of the mill, and often came out with her black hair powdered to a soft whiteness that made her dark eyes flash out with new fire. The resolute din, the unresting motion of the great stones, giving her a dim delicious awe as at the presence of an uncontrollable force — the meal forever pouring, pouring — the fine white powder

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"DEAD," SCREAMED MAGGIE.

softening all surfaces, and making the very spider nets look like a faery lace-work — the sweet pure scent of the meal — all helped to make Maggie feel that the mill was a little world apart from her outside everyday life. . . .

As she sat sliding on the heap of grain near which Luke was busying himself, she said, at that shrill pitch which was requisite in mill society,—

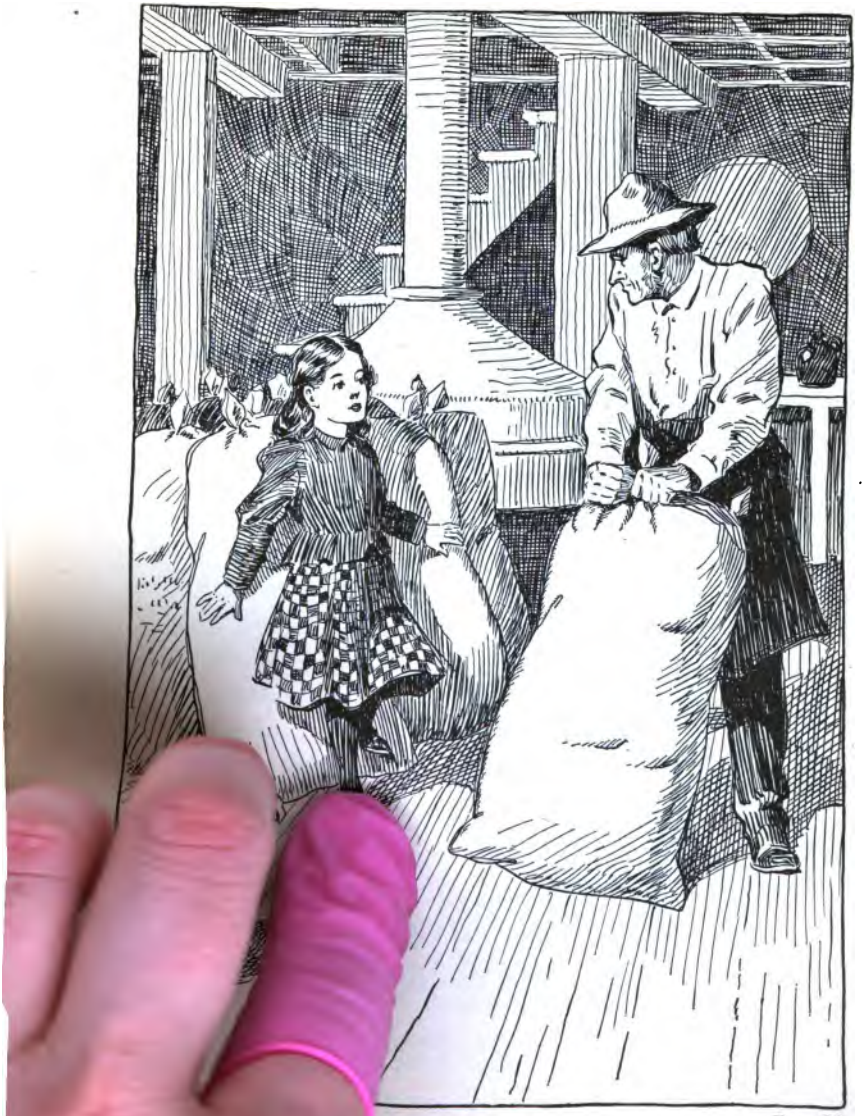
"I think you never read any book but the Bible — did you Luke?"

"Nay, Miss — an' not much o' that," said Luke, with great frankness. "I'm no reader, I aren't."

"But if I lent you one of my books, Luke? I've not got any *very* pretty books that would be easy for you to read; but there's 'Pug's Tour of Europe,'— that would tell you all about the different sorts of people in the world, and if you didn't understand the reading, the pictures would help you; they show the looks and ways of the people, and what they do. There are the Dutchmen, very fat, and smoking, you know — and one sitting on a barrel."

"Nay, Miss, I'n no opinion o' Dutchmen. There ben't much good i' knowin' about them."

"Oh, well," said Maggie, rather foiled by Luke's unexpectedly decided views about Dutchmen, "perhaps you would like 'Animated Nature' better; that's not Dutchmen, you know, but elephants and kangaroos,



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," SCREAMED MAGGIE.

and the civet-cat, and the sunfish, and a bird sitting on its tail,— I forget its name. There are countries full of those creatures, instead of horses and cows, you know. Shouldn't you like to know about them, Luke? "

" Nay, Miss. I'n got to keep count o' the flour an' corn; I can't do wi' knowin' so many things besides my work. . . . An they're mostly lies, I think, what's printed i' the books; them printed sheets are anyhow, as the men cry i' the streets."

" Why, you're like my brother Tom, Luke," said Maggie, wishing to turn the conversation agreeably; " Tom's not fond of reading. I love Tom so dearly, Luke — better than anybody else in the world. When he grows up, I shall keep his house, and we shall always live together. I can tell him everything he doesn't know. But I think Tom's clever, for all he doesn't like books: he makes beautiful whipcord and rabbit-pens."

" Ah," said Luke, " but he'll be fine and vexed, as the rabbits are all dead."

" Dead! " screamed Maggie, jumping up from her sliding seat on the corn. " Oh, dear, Luke! What! the lop-eared one, and the spotted doe that Tom spent all his money to buy? "

" As dead as moles," said Luke.

" Oh, dear, Luke," said Maggie, in a piteous tone,

while the big tears rolled down her cheek: "Tom told me to take care of 'em, and I forgot. What *shall* I do?"

"Well, you see, Miss, they were in that far tool-house, an' it was nobody's business to see to 'em. I reckon Master Tom told Harry to feed 'em, but there's no countin' on Harry."

"Oh, Luke, Tom told me to be sure and remember the rabbits every day; but how could I, when they didn't come into my head, you know? Oh, he will be so angry with me, I know he will, and so sorry about his rabbits — and so am I sorry. Oh, what *shall* I do?"

"Don't you fret, Miss," said Luke soothingly; "they're nash things, them lop-eared rabbits; they'd happen ha' died if they'd been fed. . . . Don't you fret, Miss. Will you come along home wi' me, and see my wife? I'm a-goin' this minute."

The invitation offered an agreeable distraction to Maggie's grief, and her tears gradually subsided as she trotted along by Luke's side to his pleasant cottage, which stood with its apple and pear trees and with the added dignity of a lean-to pigsty at the other end of the mill fields. Mrs. Moggs, Luke's wife, was a decidedly agreeable acquaintance. She exhibited her hospitality in bread and treacle, and possessed various works of art.

II

TOM COMES HOME

Tom was to arrive early in the afternoon, and there was another fluttering heart besides Maggie's when it was late enough for the sound of the gig-wheels to be expected; for if Mrs Tulliver had a strong feeling, it was fondness for her boy. At last the sound came — that quick light bowling of the gig-wheels — and in spite of the wind, which was blowing the clouds about, and was not likely to respect Mrs. Tulliver's curls and cap-strings, she came outside the door, and even held her hand on Maggie's offending head, forgetting all the griefs of the morning.

"There he is, my sweet lad! But, Lord ha' mercy! he's got never a collar on; it's been lost on the road, I'll be bound, and spoilt the set."

Mrs. Tulliver stood with her arms open; Maggie jumped first on one leg and then on the other; while Tom descended from the gig, and said, with masculine reticence as to the tender emotions, "Hello! Yap — what! are you there?"

Nevertheless he submitted to be kissed willingly enough, though Maggie hung on his neck in rather a strangling fashion, while his blue-gray eyes wandered towards the croft and the lambs and the river, where

he promised himself that he would begin to fish the first thing to-morrow morning. He was one of those lads that grow everywhere in England, and at twelve or thirteen years of age look as much alike as goslings; — a lad with light-brown hair, cheeks of cream and roses, full lips, indeterminate nose and eyebrows,— a physiognomy in which it seems impossible to discern anything but the generic character of boyhood; as different as possible from poor Maggie's phiz, which Nature seemed to have moulded and colored with the most decided intention.

"Maggie," said Tom, confidentially, taking her into a corner, as soon as his mother was gone out to examine his box, and the warm parlor had taken off the chill he had felt from the long drive, "you don't know what I've got in *my* pockets," nodding his head up and down as a means of rousing her sense of mystery.

"No," said Maggie. "How stodgy they look, Tom! Is it marls [marbles] or cobnuts?" Maggie's heart sank a little, because Tom always said it was "no good" playing with *her* at those games — she played so badly.

"Marls! no; I've swopped all my marls with the little fellows, and cobnuts are no fun, you silly, only when the nuts are green. But see here!" He drew something half out of his right-hand pocket.

"What is it?" said Maggie, in a whisper. "I can see nothing but a bit of yellow."

"Why, it's . . . a . . . new . . . guess, Maggie!"

"Oh, I *can't* guess, Tom," said Maggie, impatiently.

"Don't be a spitfire, else I won't tell you," said Tom, thrusting his hand back into his pocket, and looking determined.

"No, Tom," said Maggie, imploringly, laying hold of the arm that was held stiffly in the pocket. "I'm not cross, Tom; it was only because I can't bear guessing. *Please* be good to me."

Tom's arm slowly relaxed, and he said, "Well, then, it's a new fish-line — two new uns — one for you, Maggie, all to yourself. . . . And here's hooks; see here! — I say, *won't* we go and fish to-morrow down by the Round Pool? And you shall catch your own fish, Maggie, and put the worms on, and everything; won't it be fun?"

Maggie's answer was to throw her arms round Tom's neck and hug him, and hold her cheek against his without speaking, while he slowly unwound some of the line, saying, after a pause,—

"Wasn't I a good brother, now, to buy you a line all to yourself? You know I needn't have bought it, if I hadn't liked."

"Yes, very, very good — I *do* love you, Tom."

"PLEASE BE GOOD TO ME."

Tom had put the line back in his pocket, and was looking at the hooks one by one, before he spoke again.

"I shall go and see my rabbits."

Maggie's heart began to flutter with fear. She dared not tell the sad truth at once, but she walked after Tom in trembling silence, as he went out, thinking how she could tell him the news so as to soften at once his sorrow and his anger; for Maggie dreaded Tom's anger of all things; it was quite a different anger from her own.

"Tom," she said, timidly, when they were out of doors, "how much money did you give for your rabbits?"

"Two half-crowns and a sixpence," said Tom, promptly.

"I think I've got a great deal more than that in my steel purse up-stairs. I'll ask mother to give it to you."

"What for?" said Tom. "I don't want *your* money, you silly thing. I've got a great deal more money than you, because I'm a boy. I always have half-sovereigns and sovereigns for my Christmas boxes, because I shall be a man, and you only have five-shilling pieces, because you're only a girl."

"Well, but, Tom — if mother would let me give you two half-crowns and a sixpence out of my purse to put

into your pocket and spend, you know, and buy some more rabbits with it? "

"More rabbits? I don't want any more."

"Oh, but, Tom, they're all dead."

Tom stopped immediately in his walk and turned round towards Maggie. "You forgot to feed 'em, then, and Harry forgot," he said, his color heightening for a moment, but soon subsiding. "I'll pitch into Harry — I'll have him turned away. And I don't love you, Maggie. You shan't go fishing with me to-morrow. I told you to go and see the rabbits every day." He walked on again.

"Yes, but I forgot — and I couldn't help it, indeed, Tom, I'm so very sorry," said Maggie, while the tears rushed fast.

"You're a naughty girl," said Tom, severely, "and I'm sorry I bought you the fish-line. I don't love you."

"Oh, Tom, it's very cruel," sobbed Maggie. "I'd forgive you, if *you* forgot anything — I wouldn't mind what you did — I'd forgive you and love you."

"Yes, you're a silly; but I never *do* forget things, I don't."

"Oh, please forgive me, Tom, my heart will break," said Maggie, shaking with sobs, clinging to Tom's arm, and laying her wet cheek on his shoulder.

Tom shook her off, and stopped again, saying in a

peremptory tone, "Now, Maggie, you just listen. Aren't I a good brother to you?"

"Ye-ye-es," sobbed Maggie, her chin rising and falling convulsively.

"Didn't I think about your fish-line all this quarter, and mean to buy it, and saved my money o' purpose, and wouldn't go halves in the toffee, and Spouncer fought me because I wouldn't?"

"Ye-ye-es — and I-lo-lo-love you so, Tom."

"But you're a naughty girl. Last holidays you licked the paint off my lozenge-box, and the holidays before that you let the boat drag my fish-line down when I'd set you to watch it, and you pushed your head through my kite, all for nothing."

"But I didn't mean," said Maggie; "I couldn't help it."

"Yes, you could," said Tom, "if you'd minded what you were doing. And you're a naughty girl, and you shan't go fishing with me to-morrow."

With this terrible conclusion, Tom ran away from Maggie toward the mill, meaning to greet Luke there, and complain to him of Harry.

Maggie stood motionless, except from her sobs, for a minute or two; then she turned round and ran into the house, and up to her attic, where she sat on the floor, and laid her head against the worm-eaten shelf, with a crushing sense of misery. Tom was come home,

and she had thought how happy she should be; and now he was cruel to her. What use was anything if Tom didn't love her? Oh, he was very cruel! Hadn't she wanted to give him the money, and said how very sorry she was? She knew she was naughty to her mother, but she had never been naughty to Tom — had never *meant* to be naughty to him.

"Oh, he is cruel!" Maggie sobbed aloud, finding a wretched pleasure in the hollow resonance that came through the long empty space of the attic. She never thought of beating or grinding her Fetich; she was too miserable to be angry.

These bitter sorrows of childhood! when sorrow is all new and strange, when hope has not yet got wings to fly beyond the days and weeks, and the space from summer to summer seems measureless.

Maggie soon thought she had been hours in the attic, and it must be tea-time, and they were all having their tea, and not thinking of her. Well, then, she would stay up there and starve herself,— hide herself behind the tub, and stay there all night; and then they would all be frightened, and Tom would be sorry. Thus Maggie thought in the pride of her heart, as she crept behind the tub; but presently she began to cry again at the idea that they didn't mind her being there. If she went down again to Tom now — would he forgive her? Perhaps her father would be there, and he

would take her part. But then she wanted Tom to forgive her because he loved her, not because her father told him. No, she would never go down if Tom didn't come to fetch her. This resolution lasted in great intensity for five dark minutes behind the tub; but then the need of being loved — the strongest need in poor Maggie's nature — began to wrestle with her pride, and soon threw it. She crept from behind the tub into the twilight of the long attic, but just then she heard a quick footstep on the stairs.

Tom had been too much interested in his talk with Luke, in going the round of the premises, walking in and out where he pleased, and whittling sticks without any particular reason, except that he didn't whittle sticks at school, to think of Maggie and the effect his anger had produced on her. He meant to punish her, and that business having been performed, he occupied himself with other matters. But when he had been called in to tea, his father said, "Why, where's the little wench?" and Mrs. Tulliver, almost at the same moment, said, "Where's your little sister?"— both of them having supposed that Maggie and Tom had been together all the afternoon.

"I don't know," said Tom. He didn't want to "tell" of Maggie, though he was angry with her; for Tom Tulliver was a lad of honor.

"What! hasn't she been playing with you all this

while? " said the father. " She'd been thinking o' nothing but your coming home."

" I haven't seen her these two hours," says Tom, commencing on the plumcake.

" Goodness heart! she's got drownded! " exclaimed Mrs. Tulliver, rising from her seat and running to the window. " How could you let her do so? " she added, as became a fearful woman, accusing she didn't know whom of she didn't know what.

" Nay, nay, she's none drownded," said Mr. Tulliver. " You've been naughty to her, I doubt, Tom? "

" I'm sure I haven't, father," said Tim, indignantly. " I think she's in the house."

" Perhaps up in that attic," said Mrs. Tulliver, " a-singing and talking to herself, and forgetting all about meal-times."

" You go and fetch her down, Tom," said Mr. Tulliver, rather sharply,— his perspicacity or his fatherly fondness for Maggie making him suspect that the lad had been hard on " the little un," else she would never have left his side. " And be good to her, do you hear? Else I'll let you know better."

Tom never disobeyed his father, for Mr. Tulliver was a peremptory man, and, as he said, would never let anybody get hold of his whip-hand; but he went out rather sullenly, carrying his piece of plumcake, and not intending to reprieve Maggie's punishment, which

was no more than she deserved. Tom was only thirteen, and had no decided views in grammar and arithmetic, regarding them for the most part as open questions, but he was particularly clear and positive on one point,— namely, that he would punish everybody who deserved it: why, he wouldn't have minded being punished himself, if he deserved it; but, then, he never *did* deserve it.

It was Tom's step, then, that Maggie heard on the stairs, when her need of love had triumphed over her pride, and she was going down with her swollen eyes and dishevelled hair to beg for pity. At least her father would stroke her head and say, "Never mind, my wench." It is a wonderful subduer, this need of love — this hunger of the heart — as peremptory as that other hunger by which Nature forces us to submit to the yoke, and change the face of the world.

But she knew Tom's step, and her heart began to beat violently with the sudden shock of hope. He only stood still at the top of the stairs and said, "Maggie, you're to come down." But she rushed to him and clung round his neck, sobbing, "Oh, Tom, please forgive me — I can't bear it — I will always be good — always remember things — do love me — please, dear Tom!"

We learn to restrain ourselves as we get older. We keep apart when we have quarrelled, express ourselves

in well-bred phrases, and in this way preserve a dignified alienation, showing much firmness on one side, and swallowing much grief on the other. We no longer approximate in our behavior to the mere impulsiveness of the lower animals, but conduct ourselves in every respect like members of a highly civilized society. Maggie and Tom were still very much like young animals, and so she could rub her cheek against his, and kiss his ear in a random, sobbing way; and there were tender fibres in the lad that had been used to answer to Maggie's fondling; so that he behaved with a weakness quite inconsistent with his resolution to punish her as much as she deserved; he actually began to kiss her in return, and say,—

"Don't cry, then, Magsie; here, eat a bit o' cake."

Maggie's sobs began to subside, and she put out her mouth for the cake and bit a piece; and then Tom bit a piece, just for company, and they ate together and rubbed each other's cheeks and brows and noses together, while they ate, with a humiliating resemblance to two friendly ponies.

"Come along, Magsie, and have tea," said Tom at last, when there was no more cake except what was downstairs.

So ended the sorrows of this day, and the next morning Maggie was trotting with her own fishing-rod in one hand and a handle of the basket in the other, step-

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ping always, by a peculiar gift, in the muddiest places, and looking darkly radiant from under her beaver bonnet because Tom was good to her. She had told Tom, however, that she should like him to put the worms on the hook for her, although she accepted his word when he assured her that worms couldn't feel.

He knew all about worms, and fish, and those things; and what birds were mischievous, and how padlocks opened, and which way the handles of the gates were to be lifted. Maggie thought this sort of knowledge was very wonderful,— much more difficult than remembering what was in the books; and she was rather in awe of Tom's superiority, for he was the only person who called her knowledge "stuff," and did not feel surprised at her cleverness. Tom, indeed, was of opinion that Maggie was a silly little thing; all girls were silly,— they couldn't throw a stone so as to hit anything, couldn't do anything with a pocket-knife, and were frightened at frogs. Still he was very fond of his sister, and meant always to take care of her, make her his housekeeper, and punish her when she did wrong.

They were on their way to the Round Pool,— that wonderful pool which the floods had made a long while ago: no one knew how deep it was; and it was mysterious, too, that it should be almost a perfect round,

framed in with willows and tall reeds, so that the water was only to be seen when you got close to the brink. The sight of the old favorite spot always heightened Tom's good-humor, and he spoke to Maggie in the most amicable whispers, as he opened the precious basket and prepared their tackle. He threw her line for her, and put the rod into her hand. Maggie thought it probable that the small fish would come to her hook, and the large ones to Tom's. But she had forgotten all about the fish, and was looking dreamily at the glassy water, when Tom said, in a loud whisper, "Look, look, Maggie!" and came running to prevent her from snatching her line away.

Maggie was frightened lest she had been doing something wrong, as usual, but presently Tom drew out her line and brought a large tench bouncing on the grass.

Tom was excited.

"O, Magsie, you little duck! Empty the basket."

Maggie was not conscious of unusual merit, but it was enough that Tom called her Magsie, and was pleased with her. There was nothing to mar her delight in the whispers and the dreamy silences, when she listened to the light dipping sounds of the rising fish, and the gentle rustling, as if the willows and the reeds and the water had their happy whisperings also. Maggie thought it would make a very nice heaven to sit by the pool in that way, and never be scolded. She

never knew she had a bite till Tom told her; but she liked fishing very much.

It was one of their happy mornings. They trotted along and sat down together, with no thought that life would ever change much for them: they would only get bigger and not go to school, and it would always be like the holidays; they would always live together and be fond of each other.

III

THE AUNTS AND UNCLES

It was Easter week, and Mrs. Tulliver's cheese cakes were more exquisitely light than usual: "a puff o' wind 'ud make 'em blow about like feathers," Kezia the housemaid said, feeling proud to live under a mistress who could make such pastry; so that no season or circumstances could have been more propitious for a family party, even if it had not been advisable to consult Sister Glegg and Sister Pullet about Tom's going to school.

* * * * *

On Wednesday, the day before the aunts and uncles were coming, there were such various and suggestive scents as of plumcakes in the oven and jellies in the hot state, mingled with the aroma of gravy, that it

was impossible to feel altogether gloomy: there was hope in the air. Tom and Maggie made several inroads into the kitchen, and like other marauders, were induced to keep aloof for a time only by being allowed to carry away a sufficient load of booty.

"Tom," said Maggie, as they sat on the boughs of the elder tree, eating their jam-puffs, "shall you run away to-morrow?"

"No," said Tom, slowly, when he had finished his puff, and was eying the third, which was to be divided between them,—"no, I shan't."

"Why, Tom? Because Lucy's coming?"

"No," said Tom, opening his pocket-knife and holding it over the puff, with his head on one side in a dubitative manner. (It was a difficult problem to divide that very irregular polygon into two equal parts.) "What do *I* care about Lucy? She's only a girl,—*she* can't play at bandy."

"Is it the tipsy-cake, then?" said Maggie, exerting her hypnotic powers, while she leaned forward towards Tom with her eyes fixed on the hovering knife.

"No, you silly, that'll be good the day after. It's the pudden. I know what the pudden's to be,—apricot roll-up — O my buttons!"

With this interjection the knife descended on the puff, and it was in two, but the result was not satis-

factory to Tom, for he still eyed the halves doubtfully. At last he said,—

"Shut your eyes, Maggie."

"What for?"

"You never mind what for. Shut 'em when I tell you."

Maggie obeyed.

"Now, which'll you have, Maggie,— right hand or left?"

"I'll have that with the jam run out," said Maggie, keeping her eyes shut to please Tom.

"Why, you don't like that, you silly. You may have it if it comes to you fair, but I shan't give it to you without. Right or left — you choose, now. Ha-a-a!" said Tom, in a tone of exasperation, as Maggie peeped. "You keep your eyes shut, now, else you shan't have any."

Maggie's power of sacrifice did not extend so far. So she shut her eyes quite close till Tom told her to "say which," and then she said, "Left hand."

"You've got it," said Tom, in rather a bitter tone, handing decidedly the best piece to Maggie.

"Oh, please, Tom, have it; I don't mind — I like the other; please take this."

"No, I shan't," said Tom, almost crossly, beginning on his own inferior piece.

Maggie, thinking it was no use to contend further,

began too, and ate up her half puff with considerable relish as well as rapidity. But Tom had finished first, and had to look on while Maggie ate her last morsel or two, feeling in himself a capacity for more. Maggie didn't know Tom was looking at her; she was seesawing on the elder bough, lost to almost everything but a vague sense of jam and idleness.

"Oh, you greedy thing!" said Tom, when she had swallowed the last morsel. He was conscious of having acted very fairly, and thought she ought to have considered this, and made up to him for it. He would have refused a bit of hers beforehand, but one is naturally at a different point of view before and after one's own share of puff is swallowed.

Maggie turned quite pale. "Oh, Tom, why didn't you ask me?"

"*I* wasn't going to ask you for a bit, you greedy. You might have thought of it without, when you knew I gave you the best bit."

"But I wanted you to have it; you know I did," said Maggie in an injured tone.

"Yes, but I wasn't going to do what wasn't fair. If I go halves, I'll go 'em fair; only I wouldn't be a greedy."

With this cutting innuendo, Tom jumped down from his bough, and threw a stone with a "hoigh!" as a friendly attention to Yap, who had also been looking

on while the eatables vanished, with an agitation of his ears and feelings which could hardly have been without bitterness.

Maggie sat still on her bough, and gave herself up to the keen sense of unmerited reproach.

* * * * *

The company had all arrived. Aunt and Uncle Glegg came first, then Aunt Pullet and her meek little husband; then came Mrs. Deane with little Lucy; and Mrs. Tulliver had to look on with a silent pang while Lucy's blond curls were adjusted. It was quite unaccountable that Mrs. Deane, the thinnest and sallowest of all the Dodson sisters, should have had this child, who might have been taken for Mrs. Tulliver's any day. And Maggie always looked twice as dark as usual when she was by the side of Lucy.

She did to-day, when she and Tom came in from the garden with their father and their Uncle Glegg. Maggie had thrown her bonnet off very carelessly, and, coming in with her hair rough as well as out of curl, rushed at once to Lucy, who was standing by her mother's knee. Certainly the contrast between the cousins was conspicuous, and, to superficial eyes, was very much to the disadvantage of Maggie, though a connoisseur might have seen " points " in her which had a higher promise for maturity than Lucy's natty completeness. It was like the contrast between a

rough, dark, overgrown puppy and a white kitten. Lucy put up the neatest little rosebud mouth to be kissed: everything about her was neat,— her little round neck, with the row of coral beads; her little straight nose, not at all snubby; her little clear eyebrows, rather darker than her curls, to match her hazel eyes, which looked up with shy pleasure at Maggie, taller by the head, though scarcely a year older. Maggie always looked at Lucy with delight. She was fond of fancying a world where the people never got any larger than children of their own age, and she made the queen of it just like Lucy, with a little crown on her head, and a little sceptre in her hand — only the queen was Maggie herself in Lucy's form.

"Oh, Lucy," she burst out, after kissing her, "you'll stay with Tom and me, won't you? Oh, kiss her, Tom."

Tom, too, had come up to Lucy, but he was not going to kiss her — no; he came up to her with Maggie, because it seemed easier, on the whole, than saying, "How do you do?" to all those aunts and uncles.

"Heyday!" said Aunt Glegg, with loud emphasis. "Do little boys and gells come into a room without taking notice o' their uncles and aunts? That wasn't the way when *I* was a little gell."

"Go and speak to your aunts and uncles, my dears," said Mrs. Tulliver, looking anxious and melancholy.

She wanted to whisper to Maggie a command to go and have her hair brushed.

"Well, and how do you do? And I hope you're good children, are you?" said Aunt Glegg, in the same loud emphatic way, as she took their hands, hurting them with her large rings, and kissing their cheeks much against their desire. "Look up, Tom, look up. Boys as go to boarding-schools should hold their heads up. . . . Put your hair behind your ears, Maggie, and keep your frock on your shoulder."

Aunt Glegg always spoke to them in this loud emphatic way, as if she considered them deaf, or perhaps rather idiotic.

"Well, my dears," said Aunt Pullet, in a compassionate voice, "you grow wonderful fast. I doubt they'll outgrow their strength," she added, looking over their heads, with a melancholy expression, at their mother. "I think the gell has too much hair. I'd have it thinned and cut shorter, sister, if I was you: it isn't good for her health. It's that as makes her skin so brown, I shouldn't wonder. Don't you think so, Sister Deane?"

"I can't say, I'm sure, sister," said Mrs. Deane, shutting her lips close again, and looking at Maggie with a critical eye.

"No, no," said Mr. Tulliver, "the child's healthy enough; there's nothing ails her. There's red wheat

as well as white, for that matter, and some like the dark grain best. But it 'ud be as well if Bessy 'ud have the child's hair cut, so as it 'ud lie smooth."

* * * * *

"Maggie," said Mrs. Tulliver, beckoning Maggie to her, and whispering in her ear . . . "go and get your hair brushed,— do, for shame. I told you not to come in without going to Martha first; you know I did."

"Tom, come out with me," whispered Maggie, pulling his sleeve as she passed him; and Tom followed willingly enough.

"Come up-stairs with me, Tom," she whispered, when they were outside the door. "There's something I want to do before dinner."

"There's no time to play at anything before dinner," said Tom, whose imagination was impatient of any intermediate prospect.

"Oh, yes, there is time for this; *do* come, Tom."

Tom followed Maggie up-stairs into her mother's room, and saw her go at once to a drawer, from which she took out a large pair of scissors.

"What are they for, Maggie?" said Tom, feeling his curiosity awakened.

Maggie answered by seizing her front locks and cutting them straight across the middle of her forehead.

"Oh, my buttons, Maggie, you'll catch it!" exclaimed Tom; "you'd better not cut any more off."

Snip! went the great scissors again, while Tom was speaking; and he couldn't help feeling it was rather good fun; Maggie would look so queer.

"Here, Tom, cut it behind for me," said Maggie, excited by her own daring, and anxious to finish the deed.

"You'll catch it, you know," said Tom, nodding his head in an admonitory manner, and hesitating a little as he took the scissors.

"Never mind, make haste!" said Maggie, giving a little stamp with her foot. Her cheeks were quite flushed.

The black locks were so thick,—nothing could be more tempting to a lad who had already tasted the forbidden pleasure of cutting the pony's mane. One delicious grinding snip, and then another and another, and the hinder-locks fell heavily on the floor, and Maggie stood cropped in a jagged, uneven manner, but with a sense of clearness and freedom, as if she had emerged from a wood into the open plain.

"Oh, Maggie," said Tom, jumping round her, and slapping his knees as he laughed, "oh, my buttons! what a queer thing you look! Look at yourself in the glass — you look like the idiot we throw out nutshells to at school."

Maggie felt an unexpected pang. She had thought beforehand chiefly of her own deliverance from her

teasing hair and teasing remarks about it. She didn't want her hair to look pretty,— that was out of the question,— she only wanted people to think her a clever little girl, and not to find fault with her. But now, when Tom began to laugh at her, and say she was like the idiot, the affair had quite a new aspect. She looked in the glass, and still Tom laughed and clapped his hands, and Maggie's flushed cheeks began to pale, and her lips to tremble a little.

"Oh, Maggie, you'll have to go down to dinner directly," said Tom. "Oh, my!"

"Don't laugh at me, Tom," said Maggie, in a passionate tone, with an outburst of angry tears.

"Now, then, spitfire!" said Tom. "What did you cut it off for, then? I shall go down: I can smell the dinner going in."

He hurried down-stairs and left poor Maggie to that bitter sense of the irrevocable which was almost an everyday experience of her small soul. She could see clearly enough, now that the thing was done, that it was very foolish, and that she should have to hear and think more about her hair than ever; for Maggie rushed to her deeds with passionate impulse, and then saw not only their consequences, but what would have happened if they had not been done, with all the detail and exaggerated circumstance of an active imagination. . . . Maggie, as she stood crying before

the glass, felt it impossible that she should go down to dinner and endure the severe eyes and severe words of her aunts, while Tom and Lucy, and Martha, who waited at table, and perhaps her father and her uncles, would laugh at her; for if Tom had laughed at her, of course every one else would; and if she had only let her hair alone, she could have sat with Tom and Lucy, and had the apricot pudding and the custard! What could she do but sob? She sat as helpless and despairing among her black locks as Ajax among the slaughtered sheep.

"Miss Maggie, you're to come down this minute," said Kezia, entering the room hurriedly. "Lawks! what have you been a-doing? I niver *see* such a fright!"

"Don't, Kezia," said Maggie, angrily. "Go away!"

"But I tell you, you're to come down, Miss, this minute: your mother says so," said Kezia, going up to Maggie and taking her by the hand to raise her from the floor.

"Get away, Kezia; I don't want any dinner," said Maggie, resisting Kezia's arm. "I shan't come."

"Oh, well, I can't stay. I've got to wait at dinner," said Kezia, going out again.

"Maggie, you little silly," said Tom, peeping into the room ten minutes after, "why don't you come and

have your dinner? There's lots o' goodies, and mother says you're to come. What are you crying for, you little spoony? "

Oh, it was dreadful! Tom was so hard and unconcerned; if *he* had been crying on the floor, Maggie would have cried too. And there was the dinner, so nice; and she was *so* hungry. It was very bitter.

But Tom was not altogether hard. He was not inclined to cry, and did not feel that Maggie's grief spoiled his prospect of the sweets; but he went and put his head near her, and said in a lower, comforting tone,—

" Won't you come, then, Magsie? Shall I bring you a bit o' pudding when I've had mine, and a custard and things? "

" Ye-e-es," said Maggie, beginning to feel life a little more tolerable.

" Very well," said Tom, going away. But he turned again at the door and said, " But you'd better come, you know. There's the dessert — nuts, you know — and cowslip wine."

Maggie's tears had ceased, and she looked reflective as Tom left her. His good-nature had taken off the keenest edge of her suffering, and nuts with cowslip wine began to assert their legitimate influence.

Slowly she rose from amongst her scattered locks, and slowly she made her way down-stairs. Then she

stood leaning with one shoulder against the frame of the dining-room door, peeping in when it was ajar. She saw Tom and Lucy with an empty chair between them, and there were the custards on a side-table — it was too much. She slipped in and went towards the empty chair. But she had no sooner sat down than she repented, and wished herself back again.

Mrs. Tulliver gave a little scream as she saw her, and felt such a " turn " that she dropped the large gravy spoon into the dish with the most serious results to the table-cloth.

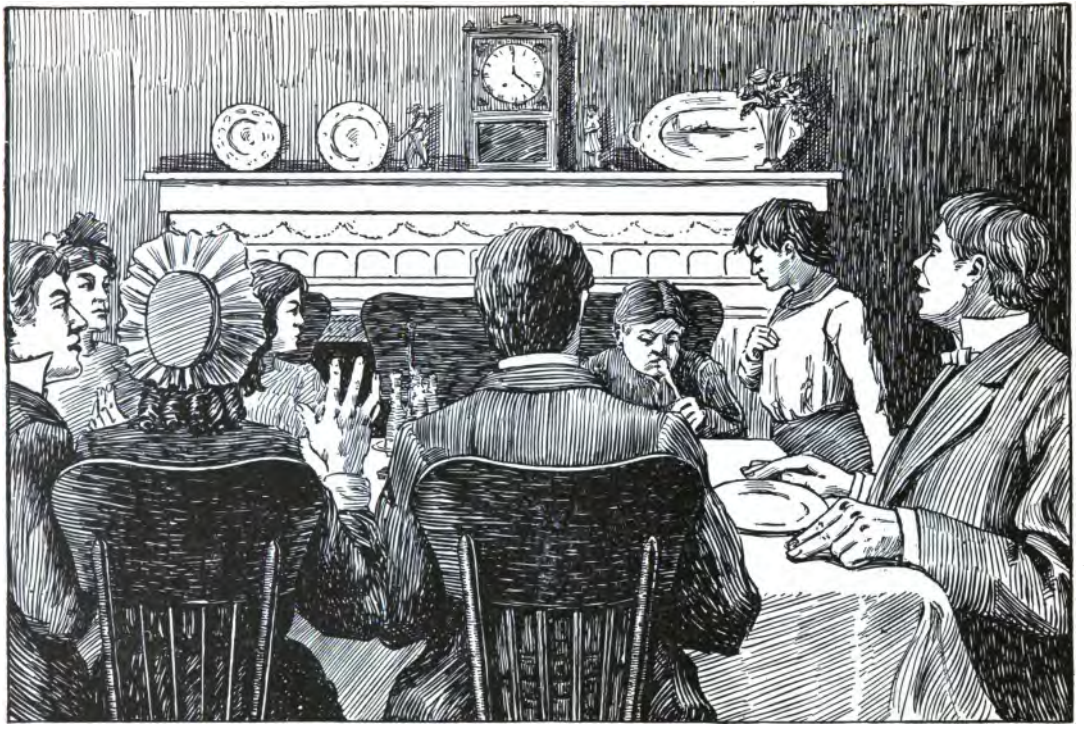
Mrs. Tulliver's scream made all eyes turn towards the same point as her own, and Maggie's cheeks and ears began to burn, while Uncle Glegg, a kind-looking, white-haired old gentleman, said,—

" Heyday! what little gell's this? Why, I don't know her. Is it some little gell you've picked up in the road, Kezia? "

" Why, she's gone and cut her hair herself," said Mr. Tulliver in an undertone to Mr. Deane, laughing with much enjoyment. " Did you ever know such a little hussy as it is? "

" Why, little miss, you've made yourself look very funny," said Uncle Pullet, and perhaps he never in his life made an observation which was felt to be so lacerating.

" Fie, for shame! " said Aunt Glegg, in her loudest,



MRS. TULLIVER GAVE A LITTLE SCREAM AS SHE SAW HER.

severest tone of reproof. "Little gells as cut their own hair should be whipped and fed on bread and water,— not come and sit down with their aunts and uncles."

"Ay, ay," said Uncle Glegg, meaning to give a playful turn to this denunciation, "she must be sent to jail, I think, and they'll cut the rest of her hair off there, and make it all even."

"She's more like a gypsy nor ever," said Aunt Pullet, in a pitying tone; "it's very bad luck, sister, as the gell should be so brown; the boy's fair enough. I doubt it'll stand in her way i' life to be so brown."

"She's a naughty child, as'll break her mother's heart," said Mrs. Tulliver, with the tears in her eyes.

Maggie seemed to be listening to a chorus of reproach and derision. Her first flush came from anger, which gave her a transient power of defiance, and Tom thought she was braving it out, supported by the recent appearance of the pudding and custard. Under this impression, he whispered, "Oh, my! Maggie, I told you you'd catch it." He meant to be friendly, but Maggie felt convinced that Tom was rejoicing in her ignominy. Her feeble power of defiance left her in an instant, her heart swelled, and, getting up from her chair, she ran to her father, hid her face on his shoulder, and burst out into loud sobbing.

"Come, come, my wench," said her father, sooth-

ingly, putting his arm around her, "never mind; you was i' the right to cut it off if it plagued you; give over crying: father'll take your part."

Delicious words of tenderness! Maggie never forgot any of these moments when her father "took her part"; she kept them in her heart, and thought of them long years after.

"How your husband does spoil that child, Bessy!" said Mrs. Glegg, in a loud "aside" to Mrs. Tulliver. "It'll be the ruin of her, if you don't take care."

Mrs. Tulliver's domestic sorrows seemed at this moment to have reached the point at which insensibility begins. She took no notice of her sister's remark, but threw back her cap-strings and dispensed the pudding, in mute resignation.

With the dessert there came entire deliverance for Maggie, for the children were told they might have their nuts and wine in the summer-house, since the day was so mild, and they scampered out among the budding bushes of the garden with the alacrity of small animals getting from under a burning glass.

IV

A VISIT TO GARUM FIRS

On the following day, Mrs. Tulliver and the children, with Lucy who had remained, were to take tea

with Aunt Pullet at Garum Firs. The day had begun ill with Maggie. The pleasure of having Lucy to look at, and the prospect of the afternoon visit to Garum Firs, where she would hear Uncle Pullet's musical box, had been marred as early as eleven o'clock by the advent of the hair-dresser from St. Ogg's, who had spoken in the severest terms of the condition in which he had found her hair, holding up one jagged lock after another and saying, "See here! tut — tut — tut!" in a tone of mingled disgust and pity, which to Maggie's imagination was equivalent to the strongest expression of public opinion.

Moreover, the preparation for a visit being always a serious affair in the Dodson family, Martha was enjoined to have Mrs. Tulliver's room ready an hour earlier than usual, that the laying out of the best clothes might not be deferred till the last moment. Already at twelve o'clock, Mrs. Tulliver had on her visiting costume, with a protective apparatus of brown holland, as if she had been a piece of satin furniture in danger of flies; Maggie was frowning and twisting her shoulders, that she might if possible shrink away from the prickliest of tuckers, while her mother was remonstrating, "Don't, Maggie, my dear — don't make yourself so ugly!" and Tom's cheeks were looking particularly brilliant as a relief to his best blue suit, which he wore with becoming

calmness. He had transferred all the contents of his every-day pockets to those actually in wear.

As for Lucy, she was just as pretty and neat as she had been yesterday: no accidents ever happened to her clothes, and she was never uncomfortable in them, so that she looked with wondering pity at Maggie, pouting and writhing under the exasperating tucker.

They were allowed to build card-houses till dinner, as a suitable amusement for boys and girls in their best clothes. Tom could build perfect pyramids of houses; but Maggie's would never bear the laying on the roof: it was always so with the things Maggie made; and Tom had deduced the conclusion that no girls could ever make anything. But it happened that Lucy proved wonderfully clever at building: she handled the cards so lightly, and moved so gently, that Tom condescended to admire her houses as well as his own. . . . Maggie, too, would have admired Lucy's houses, and would have given up her own unsuccessful building to contemplate them if the tucker had not made her peevish, and if Tom had not inconsiderately laughed when her houses fell, and told her she was "a stupid."

"Don't laugh at me, Tom!" she burst out, angrily; "I'm not a stupid. I know a great many things you don't."

"Oh, I dare say, Miss Spitfire! I'd never be such a cross thing as you — making faces like that. Lucy doesn't do so. I like Lucy better than you; *I* wish Lucy was *my* sister."

"Then it's very wicked and cruel of you to wish so," said Maggie, starting up hurriedly from her place on the floor, and upsetting Tom's wonderful pagoda. She really did not mean it, but the circumstantial evidence was against her, and Tom turned white with anger, but said nothing: he would have struck her, only he knew it was cowardly to strike a girl, and Tom Tulliver was quite determined he would never do anything cowardly.

Maggie stood in dismay and terror, while Tom got up from the floor and walked away, pale, from the scattered ruins of his pagoda, and Lucy looked on mutely.

"Oh, Tom," said Maggie, at last, going half-way towards him, "I didn't mean to knock it down — indeed, indeed I didn't."

Tom took no notice of her.

Thus the morning had been made heavy to Maggie, and Tom's persistent coldness to her all through their walk spoiled the fresh air and sunshine for her.

Still, the sight of the peacock opportunely spreading his tail on the stackyard wall, just as they reached Garum Firs, was enough to divert the mind temporar-

ily from personal grievances. And this was only the beginning of beautiful sights at Garum Firs. All the farmyard life was wonderful there — bantams, speckled and top-knotted. Guinea fowls that flew and screamed and dropped their pretty spotted feathers; pouter-pigeons and a tame magpie; nay, a goat, and a wonderful brindled dog, half mastiff, half bulldog, as large as a lion.

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Uncle Pullet had seen the expected party approaching from the window, and made haste to unbar and unchain the front door. Aunt Pullet, too, appeared at the doorway, and as soon as her sister was within hearing said, "Stop the children, Bessy; don't let 'em come up the door-steps: Sally's bringing the old mat and the duster, to rub their shoes."

Hardly were they all seated, when Uncle Pullet brought sweet cakes, but the three children had no sooner got the tempting delicacy between their fingers than Aunt Pullet desired them to abstain from eating it till the tray and the plates came, since with those crisp cakes they would make the floor "all over" crumbs. Lucy didn't mind that much, for the cake was so pretty, she thought it was rather a pity to eat it; but Tom, watching his opportunity while the elders were talking, hastily stowed it in his mouth at two bites, and chewed it furtively. As for Maggie, be-

coming fascinated, as usual, by a picture, she presently let fall her cake, and in an unlucky movement crushed it beneath her foot, a source of so much agitation to Aunt Pullet and conscious disgrace to Maggie, that she began to despair of hearing Uncle Pullet's musical snuffbox to-day, till, after some reflection, it occurred to her that Lucy was in high favor enough to venture on asking for a tune. So she whispered to Lucy, and Lucy, who always did what she was desired to do, went up quietly to her uncle's knee, and blushing all over her neck while she fingered her necklace, said, "Will you please play us a tune, uncle?"

When the tune began, Maggie for the first time quite forgot that she had a load on her mind — that Tom was angry with her; and by the time "Hush, ye pretty warbling choir," had been played, her face wore that bright look of happiness, while she sat immovable with her hands clasped, which sometimes comforted her mother with the sense that Maggie could look pretty now and then, in spite of her brown skin. But when the magic music ceased, she jumped up, and, running towards Tom, put her arm round his neck and said, "Oh, Tom, isn't it pretty?"

Lest you should think it showed a revolting insensibility in Tom that he felt any new anger towards Maggie for this uncalled-for, and, to him, inexplicable caress, I must tell you that he had his glass of cowslip

wine in his hand, and that she jerked him so as to make him spill half of it. "Look there, now!" he said angrily.

"Why don't you sit still, Maggie?" her mother said, peevishly.

"Little gells mustn't come to see me if they behave in that way," said Aunt Pullet.

"Why, you're too rough, little miss," said Uncle Pullet.

Poor Maggie sat down again, with the music all chased out of her soul, and the seven small demons all in again.

Mrs. Tulliver, foreseeing nothing but misbehavior while the children remained indoors, took an early opportunity of suggesting that, now they were rested after their walk, they might go and play out of doors.

* * * * *

When the three children went out to play, the small demons who had taken possession of Maggie's soul at an early period of the day returned with greater force after a temporary absence. All the disagreeable recollections of the morning were thick upon her, when Tom, whose displeasure towards her had been considerably refreshed by her foolish trick of causing him to upset his cowslip wine, said, "Here, Lucy, you come along with me," and walked off.

Maggie lingered at a distance, looking like a small Medusa with her snakes cropped. As long as Tom seemed to prefer Lucy to her, Lucy made part of his unkindness. Maggie would have thought a little while ago that she could never be cross with pretty little Lucy, any more than she could be cruel to a little white mouse; but then, Tom had always been quite indifferent to Lucy before, and it had been left to Maggie to pet and make much of her. As it was, she was actually beginning to think that she should like to make Lucy cry, especially as it might vex Tom. If Lucy hadn't been there, Maggie was sure he would have got friends with her sooner.

Tom began to meditate an insurrectionary visit to the pond, about a field's length beyond the garden.

"I say, Lucy," he began, nodding his head up and down with great significance. "What do you think I mean to do? I mean to go to the pond and look at the pike. You may go with me if you like."

"Oh, Tom, *dare* you?" said Lucy. "Aunt said we mustn't go out of the garden."

"Oh, never mind, they won't be cross with *you*," said Tom. "You say I took you."

Tom walked along, and Lucy trotted by his side, timidly enjoying the rare treat of doing something naughty — excited also by the mention of that celeb-

rity, the pike, about which she was quite uncertain whether it was a fish or a fowl. Maggie saw them leave the garden and could not resist the impulse to follow. . . . So she kept a few yards behind them, unobserved by Tom, who was presently absorbed in watching for the pike — a highly interesting monster; he was said to be so very old, so very large, and to have such a remarkable appetite. The pike, like other celebrities, did not show when he was watched for, but Tom caught sight of something in rapid movement in the water, which attracted him to another spot on the brink of the pond.

"Here, Lucy," he said in a loud whisper, "come here! Take care! keep on the grass."

Lucy came carefully as she was bidden, and bent down to look at what seemed a golden arrow-head darting through the water. It was a water-snake, Tom told her, and Lucy at last could see the serpentine wave of its body, very much wondering that a snake could swim. Maggie had drawn nearer and nearer; she *must* see it, too, though it was bitter to her like everything else, since Tom did not care about her seeing it. At last, she was close by Lucy, and Tom, who had been aware of her approach, but would not notice it till he was obliged, turned round and said,—

"Now, get away, Maggie; there's no room for you on the grass here. Nobody asked *you* to come."

There were passions at war in Maggie at that moment to have made a tragedy, if tragedies were made by passion only. The utmost she could do, with a fierce thrust of her small brown arm, was to push poor little pink-and-white Lucy into the cow-trodden mud.

Then Tom could not restrain himself, and gave Maggie two smart slaps on the arm as he ran to pick up Lucy, who lay crying helplessly. Maggie retreated to the roots of a tree a few yards off, and looked on impenitently. Usually her repentance came quickly after one rash deed, but now Tom and Lucy had made her so miserable, she was glad to spoil their happiness,— glad to make everybody uncomfortable.

"I shall tell mother, you know, Miss Mag," said Tom, loudly and emphatically, as soon as Lucy was up and ready to walk away. It was not Tom's practice to "tell," but here justice clearly demanded that Maggie should be visited with the utmost punishment. . . . Lucy was too entirely absorbed by the evil that had befallen her — the spoiling of her pretty best clothes, and the discomfort of being wet and dirty — to think much of the cause, which was entirely mysterious to her. She could never have guessed what she had done to make Maggie angry with her; but she felt that Maggie was very unkind and disagreeable, and made no magnanimous entreaties to Tom that he would not

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"SALLIE, TELL MOTHER IT WAS MAGGIE PUSHED LUCY INTO THE MUD."

"tell," only running along by his side and crying piteously, while Maggie sat on the roots of the tree and looked after them.

"Sally," said Tom, when they reached the kitchen door, and Sally looked at them in speechless amazement, with a piece of bread and butter in her mouth and a toasting-fork in her hand,—"Sally, tell mother it was Maggie pushed Lucy into the mud."

"But Lors ha' massy, how did you get near such mud as that?" said Sally, making a wry face. She lost no time in presenting Lucy at the parlor door, for to have so dirty an object introduced into the house at Garum Firs was too great a weight to be sustained by a single mind.

"Goodness gracious!" Aunt Pullet exclaimed, "keep her at the door, Sally! Don't bring her off the oil-cloth, whatever you do."

"Why, she's tumbled into some nasty mud," said Mrs. Tulliver, going up to Lucy to examine into the amount of damage to clothes for which she felt herself responsible to her sister Deane.

"If you please, 'um, it was Miss Maggie as pushed her in," said Sally; "Master Tom's been and said so, and they must ha' been to the pond, for it's only there they could ha' got into such dirt."

"There it is, Bessy; it's what I've been telling you," said Mrs. Pullet, in a tone of prophetic sadness;

" it's your children,— there's no knowing what they'll come to."

Mrs. Tulliver was mute, feeling herself a truly wretched mother. . . . Mrs. Pullet began to give elaborate directions to Sally how to guard the premises from serious injury in the course of removing the dirt. Meantime tea was to be brought in by the cook, and the two naughty children were to have theirs in an ignominious manner in the kitchen. Mrs. Tulliver went out to speak to these naughty children, supposing them to be close at hand; but it was not until after some search that she found Tom leaning with rather a hardened careless air against the white paling of the poultry yard.

" Tom, you naughty boy, where's your sister? " said Mrs. Tulliver, in a distressed voice.

" I don't know," said Tom.

" Why, where did you leave her? " said his mother, looking round.

" Sitting under the tree, against the pond," said Tom.

" Then go and fetch her in this minute, you naughty boy. And how could you think o' going to the pond, and taking your sister where there was dirt? You know she'll do mischief if there's mischief to be done."

The idea of Maggie sitting alone by the pond roused

an habitual fear in Mrs. Tulliver's mind, and she mounted the horse-block to satisfy herself by a sight of that fatal child, while Tom walked — not very quickly — on his way toward her.

"They're such children for the water, mine are," she said aloud, without reflecting that there was no one to hear her, "they'll be brought in dead and drownded some day."

When she not only failed to discern Maggie, but presently saw Tom returning from the pool alone, this hovering fear entered and took complete possession of her, and she hurried to meet him.

"Maggie's nowhere about the pond, mother," said Tom; "she's gone away."

You may conceive the terrified search for Maggie, and the difficulty of convincing her mother that she was not in the pond. Mrs. Pullet observed that the child might come to a worse end if she lived, there was no knowing; and Mr. Pullet, confused and overwhelmed by this revolutionary aspect of things — the tea deferred and the poultry alarmed by the unusual running to and fro — reached down a key to unlock the goose-pen as a likely place for Maggie to be concealed in.

Tom, after a while, started the idea that Maggie was gone home, and the suggestion was seized as a comfort by his mother.

"Sister, for goodness' sake let 'em put the horse in the carriage and take me home; we shall perhaps find her on the road. Lucy can't walk in her dirty clothes," she said, looking at that innocent victim, who was wrapped up in a shawl, and sitting with naked feet on the sofa.

Aunt Pullet was quite willing to take the shortest means of restoring her premises to order and quiet, and it was not long before Mrs. Tulliver was in the chaise, looking anxiously at the most distant point before her. What the father would say if Maggie was lost, was a question that predominated over every other.

V

MAGGIE AND THE GYPSIES

MAGGIE's intentions, as usual, were on a larger scale than Tom had imagined. The resolution that gathered in her mind, after Tom and Lucy had walked away, was not so simple as that of going home. No! she would run away and go to the gypsies, and Tom should never see her any more. That was by no means a new idea to Maggie; she had been so often told she was like a gypsy, and "half wild," that when she was miserable it seemed to her the only way of escaping

opprobrium and being entirely in harmony with circumstances, would be to live in a little brown tent on the commons; the gypsies, she considered, would gladly receive her and pay her much respect on account of her superior knowledge. She had once mentioned her views on this point to Tom, and suggested that he should stain his face brown, and they should run away together; but Tom rejected the scheme with contempt, observing that gypsies were thieves, and hardly got anything to eat, and had nothing to drive but a donkey.

To-day, however, Maggie thought her misery had reached a pitch at which gypsydom was her only refuge, and she rose from her seat on the roots of the tree with the sense that this was a great crisis in her life; she would run straight away till she came to Dunlow Common, where there would certainly be gypsies; and cruel Tom, and the rest of her relatives who found fault with her, should never see her any more. She thought of her father as she ran along, but she reconciled herself to the idea of parting with him, by determining that she would secretly send him a letter by a small gypsy, who would run away without telling where she was, and just let him know that she was well and happy, and always loved him very much.

Maggie soon got out of breath with running, but by the time Tom got to the pond again she was at the dis-

tance of three long fields, and was on the edge of the lane leading to the highroad. She stopped to pant a little, reflecting that running away was not a pleasant thing until one had got quite to the common where the gypsies were, but her resolution had not abated: she presently passed through the gate into the lane, not knowing where it would lead her.

But she was soon aware, not without trembling, that there were two men coming along the lane in front of her. . . . The formidable strangers were two shabby-looking men, with flushed faces, one of them carrying a bundle on a stick over his shoulder; but to her surprise, while she was dreading their disapprobation as a runaway, the man with the bundle stopped, and in a half-whining, half-coaxing tone asked her if she had a copper to give a poor man. Maggie had a sixpence in her pocket,— her Uncle Glegg's present,— which she immediately drew out and gave this poor man with a polite smile, hoping he would feel very kindly towards her as a generous person.

"That's the only money I've got," she said apologetically.

"Thank you, little miss," said the man, in a less respectful and grateful tone than Maggie anticipated, and she even observed that he smiled and winked at his companion. She walked on hurriedly, but was aware that the two men were standing still, probably to look

after her, and she presently heard them laughing loudly. . . . She thought she would turn into the fields again; but not on the same side of the lane as before, lest they should still be Uncle Pullet's fields. She turned through the first gate that was not locked, and felt a delightful sense of privacy in creeping along by the hedge-rows, after her recent humiliating encounter. She was used to wandering about the fields by herself, and was less timid there than on the high-road. Sometimes she had to climb over high gates, but that was a small evil; she was getting out of reach very fast.

At last, however, the green fields came to an end, and Maggie found herself looking through the bars of a gate into a lane with a wide margin of grass on each side of it. She crept through the bars of the gate and walked on with new spirit, though not without haunting images of Apollyon, and a highwayman with a pistol, and a blinking dwarf in yellow, with a mouth from ear to ear. For poor little Maggie had at once the timidity of an active imagination and the daring that comes from overmastering impulse. It was not without a leaping of the heart that she caught sight of a small pair of bare legs sticking up, feet uppermost, by the side of a hillock. It was a boy asleep, and Maggie trotted along faster and more lightly, lest she she should wake him; it did not occur to her that he

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MAGGIE LOOKED UP IN THE NEW FACE RATHER TREMBLINGLY AS IT APPROACHED.

was one of her friends the gypsies, who in all probability would have very genial manners.

But the fact was so, for at the next bend in the lane, Maggie actually saw the little semicircular black tent with the blue smoke rising before it, which was to be her refuge. She even saw a tall female figure by the column of smoke — doubtless the gypsy-mother, who provided the tea and other groceries; it was astonishing to herself that she did not feel more delighted.

It was plain she had attracted attention; for the tall figure, who proved to be a young woman with a baby on her arm, walked slowly to meet her. Maggie looked up in the new face rather tremblingly as it approached and was reassured by the thought that her Aunt Pullet and the rest were right when they called her a gypsy, for this face, with the bright dark eyes and the long hair, was really something like what she used to see in the glass before she cut her hair off.

"My little lady, where are you going to?" the gypsy said, in a tone of coaxing deference.

It was delightful, and just what Maggie expected; the gypsies saw at once that she was a little lady, and were prepared to treat her accordingly.

"Not any farther," said Maggie, feeling as if she were saying what she had rehearsed in a dream. "I'm come to stay with *you*, please."

"That's pretty; come, then. Why, what a nice little lady you are, to be sure," said the gypsy, taking her by the hand. Maggie thought her very agreeable, but wished she had not been so dirty.

There was quite a group round the fire when they reached it. An old gypsy woman was seated on the ground nursing her knees, and occasionally poking a skewer into the round kettle that sent forth an odorous steam; two small shock-headed children were lying prone and resting on their elbows something like small sphinxes; and a placid donkey was bending his head over a tall girl, who, lying on her back, was scratching his nose and indulging him with a bite of excellent stolen hay. The slanting sunlight fell kindly upon them, and the scene was really very pretty and comfortable, Maggie thought, only she hoped they would soon set out the tea-cups. Everything would be quite charming when she had taught the gypsies to use a washing-basin, and to feel an interest in books. It was a little confusing, though, that the young woman began to speak to the old one in a language which Maggie did not understand, while the tall girl, who was feeding the donkey, sat up and stared at her without offering any salutation. At last the old woman said,—

"What! my pretty lady, are you come to stay with us? Sit ye down and tell us where you come from."

It was just like a story: Maggie liked to be called

pretty lady and treated in this way. She sat down and said,—

"I'm come from home because I'm unhappy, and I mean to be a gypsy. I'll live with you if you like, and I can teach you a great many things."

"Such a clever little lady," said the woman with the baby, sitting down by Maggie, and allowing baby to crawl; "and such a pretty bonnet and frock," she added, taking off Maggie's bonnet and looking at it while she made an observation to the old woman, in the unknown language. The tall girl snatched the bonnet and put it on her own head hind-foremost with a grin; but Maggie was determined not to show any weakness on this subject, as if she were susceptible about her bonnet.

"I don't want to wear a bonnet," she said; "I'd rather wear a red handkerchief, like yours."

"Oh, what a nice little lady! and rich, I'm sure," said the old woman. "Didn't you live in a beautiful house at home?"

"Yes, my home is pretty, and I'm very fond of the river, where we go fishing, but I'm often very unhappy. I should have liked to bring my books with me, but I came away in a hurry, you know. But I can tell you almost everything there is in my books, I've read them so many times, and that will amuse you. And I can tell you something about geography, too —

that's about the world we live in — very useful and interesting. Did you ever hear about Columbus? "

Maggie's eyes had begun to sparkle and her cheeks to flush — she was really beginning to instruct the gypsies, and gaining great influence over them. The gypsies themselves were not without amazement at this talk, though their attention was divided by the contents of Maggie's pocket, which the friend at her right hand had by this time emptied without attracting her notice.

" Is that where you live, my little lady? " said the old woman, at the mention of Columbus.

" Oh, no! " said Maggie, with some pity; " Columbus was a very wonderful man, who found out half the world, and they put chains on him and treated him very badly, you know — it's in my Catechism of Geography — but perhaps it's rather too long to tell before tea — *I want my tea so.*"

" Why, she's hungry, poor little lady," said the younger woman. " Give her some o' the cold victual. You've been walking a good way, I'll be bound, my dear. Where's your home? "

" It's Dorlcote Mill, a good way off," said Maggie. " My father is Mr. Tulliver, but we mustn't let him know where I am, else he'll fetch me home again. Where does the queen of the gypsies live? "

" What! do you want to go to her, my little lady? " said the younger woman. The tall girl meanwhile was

constantly staring at Maggie and grinning. Her manners were certainly not agreeable.

"No," said Maggie, "I'm only thinking that if she isn't a very good queen you might be glad when she died, and you could choose another. If I was a queen, I'd be a very good queen, and kind to everybody."

"Here's a bit o' nice victual, then," said the old woman, handing to Maggie a lump of dry bread, which she had taken from a bag of scraps, and a piece of cold bacon.

"Thank you," said Maggie, looking at the food without taking it; "but will you give me some bread and butter and tea instead? I don't like bacon."

"We've got no tea nor butter," said the old woman, with something like a scowl, as if she were getting tired of coaxing.

"Oh, a little bread and treacle would do," said Maggie.

"We han't got no treacle," said the old woman crossly, whereupon there followed a sharp dialogue between the two women in their unknown tongue, and one of the small sphinxes snatched at the bread and bacon, and began to eat it. At this moment the tall girl, who had gone a few yards off, came back, and said something which produced a strong effect. The old woman, seeming to forget Maggie's hunger, poked the skewer into the pot with new vigor, and the younger

crept under the tent, and reached out some platters and spoons. Maggie trembled a little, and was afraid the tears would come into her eyes.

Meanwhile the tall girl gave a shrill cry, and presently came running up the boy whom Maggie had passed as he was sleeping,— a rough urchin about the age of Tom. He stared at Maggie, and there ensued much incomprehensible chatter. She felt very lonely, and was quite sure she should begin to cry before long: the gypsies didn't seem to mind her at all, and she felt quite weak among them. But the springing tears were checked by new terror, when two men came up, whose approach had been the cause of the sudden excitement. The elder of the two carried a bag, which he flung down, addressing the women in a loud and scolding tone, which they answered by a shower of treble sauciness; while a black cur ran barking up to Maggie and threw her into a tremor that only found a new cause in the curses with which the younger man called the dog off, and gave him a rap with a great stick he held in his hand.

Maggie felt that it was impossible she should ever be queen of these people, or ever communicate to them amusing and useful knowledge.

Both the men now seemed to be inquiring about Maggie. At last the younger woman said in her previous deferential, coaxing tone,—

"This nice little lady's come to live with us; aren't you glad?"

"Ay, very glad," said the younger man, who was looking at Maggie's silver thimble and other small matters that had been taken from her pocket. He returned them all, except the thimble, to the younger woman, with some observation, and she immediately restored them to Maggie's pocket, while the men seated themselves, and began to attack the contents of the kettle — a stew of meat and potatoes — which had been taken off the fire and turned out into a yellow platter.

Maggie began to think that Tom must be right about the gypsies; they must certainly be thieves, unless the man meant to return her thimble by and by. She would willingly have given it to him, for she was not at all attached to her thimble; but the idea that she was among thieves prevented her from feeling any comfort in the revival of deference and attention toward her. All thieves, except Robin Hood, were wicked. The women saw she was frightened.

"We've got nothing nice for a lady to eat," said the old woman, in her coaxing tone, "and she's so hungry, sweet little lady."

"Here, my dear, try if you can eat a bit o' this," said the younger woman, handing some of the stew on a brown dish with an iron spoon to Maggie, who, remembering that the old woman had seemed angry with

her for not liking the bread and bacon, dared not refuse the stew, though fear had chased away her appetite. If her father would but come by in the gig and take her up!

Her ideas about the gypsies had undergone a rapid modification in the last five minutes. From having considered them very respectable companions, amenable to instruction, she had begun to think that they meant perhaps to kill her as soon as it was dark. . . . It was no use trying to eat the stew, and yet the thing she most dreaded was to offend the gypsies.

"What! you don't like the smell of it, my dear," said the young woman, observing that Maggie did not even take a spoonful of the stew. "Try a bit — come."

"No, thank you," said Maggie, trying to smile in a friendly way. "I haven't time, I think; it seems getting darker. I think I must go home now, and come again another day, and then I can bring you a basket with some jam-tarts and things."

Maggie rose from her seat as she threw out this illusory prospect, but her hope sank when the old gypsy woman said, "Stop a bit, stop a bit, little lady; we'll take you home, all safe, when we've done supper; you shall ride home like a lady."

Maggie sat down again, with little faith in this promise, though she presently saw the tall girl putting

a bridle on the donkey, and throwing a couple of bags on his back.

"Now then, little missis," said the younger man, rising and leading the donkey forward, "tell us where you live; what's the name of the place?"

"Dorlcote Mill is my home," said Maggie, eagerly. "My father is Mr. Tulliver; he lives there."

"What! a big mill a little way this side o' St. Ogg's?"

"Yes," said Maggie, "it is far off? I think I should like to walk there, if you please."

"No, no, it'll be getting dark, we must make haste. And the donkey'll carry you as nice as can be; you'll see."

He lifted Maggie as he spoke and set her on the donkey. She felt relieved that it was not the old man who seemed to be going with her, but she had only a trembling hope that she was really going home.

"Here's your pretty bonnet," said the younger woman, putting that recently-despised but now welcome article of costume on Maggie's head; "and you'll say we've been very good to you, won't you? and what a nice little lady we said you was."

"Oh, yes, thank you," said Maggie. "I'm very much obliged to you. But I wish you'd go with me too." She thought anything was better than going with one of the dreadful men alone.

"Ah, you're fondest o' *me,* aren't you? " said the woman. "But I can't go, you'll go too fast for me."

It now appeared that the man also was to be seated on the donkey, holding Maggie before him, and she was as incapable of remonstrating against this arrangement as the donkey himself, though no nightmare had ever seemed to her more horrible. When the woman had patted her on the back, and said, "Good-by," the donkey, at a strong hint from the man's stick, set off at a rapid walk along the lane towards the point Maggie had come from an hour ago, while the tall girl and the rough urchin, also furnished with sticks, obligingly escorted them for the first hundred yards, with much screaming and thwacking.

Poor Maggie was terrified in this ride on a short-paced donkey, with a gypsy behind her, who considered that he was earning half-a-crown. The red light of the setting sun seemed to have a portentous meaning.

At last — oh, sight of joy! — this lane, the longest in the world, was coming to an end, was opening on a broad highroad, where there was actually a coach passing! . . . The gypsy really meant to take her home, then: he was probably a good man, after all, and might have been rather hurt at the thought that she didn't like coming with him alone. This idea became stronger as she felt more and more certain that she knew the road quite well, and she was considering how

she might open a conversation with the injured gypsy, when, as they reached a cross-road, Maggie caught sight of some one coming on a white-faced horse.

"Oh, stop, stop!" she cried out. "There's my father! Oh, father, father!"

The sudden joy was almost painful, and before her father reached her, she was sobbing. Great was Mr. Tulliver's wonder, for he had not yet been home.

"Why, what's the meaning o' this?" he said, checking his horse, while Maggie slipped from the donkey and ran to her father's stirrup.

"The little miss lost herself, I reckon," said the gypsy. "She'd come to our tent at the far end o' Dunlow Lane, and I was bringing her where she said her home was. It's a good way to come arter being on the tramp all day."

"Oh, yes, father, he's been very good to bring me home," said Maggie. "A very kind, good man!"

"Here, then, my man," said Mr. Tulliver, taking out five shillings. "It's the best day's work *you* ever did. I couldn't afford to lose the little wench; here, lift her up before me."

"Why, Maggie, how's this, how's this?" he said, as they rode along, while she laid her head against her father, and sobbed. "How came you to be rambling about and lose yourself?"

"Oh, father," sobbed Maggie, "I ran away because

I was so unhappy — Tom was so angry with me. I couldn't bear it."

"Pooh, pooh," said Mr. Tulliver, soothingly, "you mustn't think o' running away from father. What 'ud father do without his little wench? "

"Oh, no, I never will again, father — never."

Mr. Tulliver spoke his mind very strongly when he reached home that evening, and the effect was seen in the remarkable fact that Maggie never heard one reproach from her mother, or one taunt from Tom about this foolish business of her running away to the gypsies. Maggie was rather awe-stricken by this unusual treatment, and sometimes thought that her conduct had been too wicked to be alluded to.

LITTLE NELL AND MRS. JARLEY

(From "The Old Curiosity Shop")

CHARLES DICKENS

LITTLE NELL AND MRS. JARLEY

I

THE LADY OF THE CARAVAN

THE sun darting his cheerful rays into the room, awoke little Nell; and now there remained but to take leave of the poor schoolmaster and wander forth once more.

By the time they were ready to depart, school had begun. In the darkened room, the din of yesterday was going on again. The schoolmaster rose from his desk and walked with them to the gate.

It was with a trembling and reluctant hand that the child held out to him the money which the lady had given her at the races for her flowers: faltering in her thanks as she thought how small the sum was, and blushing as she offered it. But he bade her put it up, and stooping to kiss her cheek, turned back into his house.

They had not gone half-a-dozen paces when he was at the door again; the old man retraced his steps to shake hands, and the child did the same.

"Good-fortune and happiness go with you!" said the poor schoolmaster. "If you ever pass this way again, you'll not forget the little village school."

"We shall never forget it, sir," rejoined Nell; "nor ever forget to be grateful to you for your kindness to us."

They bade him farewell very many times, and turned away, walking slowly and often looking back, until they could see him no more. At length they had left the village far behind, and even lost sight of the smoke among the trees. They trudged onward now, at a quicker pace, resolving to keep the main road, and go wherever it might lead them.

* * * * *

The afternoon had worn away into a beautiful evening when they arrived at a point where the road made a sharp turn and struck across a common. On the border of this common, and close to the hedge which divided it from the cultivated fields, a caravan was drawn up to rest; upon which, by reason of its situation, they came so suddenly that they could not have avoided it if they would.

It was not a shabby, dingy, dusty cart, but a smart little house upon wheels, with white dimity curtains festooning the windows, and window-shutters of green picked out with panels of a staring red, in which happily contrasted colors the whole concern shone bril-

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AT THE OPEN DOOR, SAT A CHRISTIAN LADY.

liant. Neither was it a poor caravan drawn by a single donkey or emaciated horse, for a pair of horses in pretty good condition were released from the shafts and grazing on the frouzy grass. Neither was it a gypsy caravan, for at the open door (graced with a bright brass knocker) sat a christian lady, stout and comfortable to look upon, who wore a large bonnet trembling with bows. And that it was not an unprovided or destitute caravan was clear from this lady's occupation, which was the very pleasant and refreshing one of taking tea. The tea things, including a bottle of rather suspicious character and a cold knuckle of ham, were set forth upon a drum, covered with a white napkin; and there, as if at the most convenient round-table in all the world, sat this roving lady, taking her tea and enjoying the prospect.

It happened that at that moment the lady of the caravan had her cup (which, that everything about her might be of a stout and comfortable kind, was a breakfast cup) to her lips, and that having her eyes lifted to the sky in her enjoyment of the full flavor of the tea, it happened that being thus agreeably engaged, she did not see the travellers when they first came up. It was not until she was in the act of setting down the cup, and drawing a long breath after the exertion of causing its contents to disappear, that the lady of the caravan beheld an old man and a young child walking

slowly by, and glancing at her proceedings with eyes of modest but hungry admiration.

"Hey!" cried the lady of the caravan, scooping the crumbs out of her lap and swallowing the same before wiping her lips. "Yes, to be sure. Who won the Helter Skelter Plate, child?"

"Won what, ma'am?" asked Nell.

"The Helter Skelter Plate at the races, child — the plate that was run for on the second day."

"On the second day, ma'am?"

"Second day! Yes, second day," repeated the lady, with an air of impatience. "Can't you say who won the Helter Skelter Plate when you're asked the question civilly?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Don't know?" repeated the lady of the caravan, "why, you were there. I saw you with my own eyes and very sorry I was to see you in company with a Punch — a low practical wulgar wretch, that people should scorn to look at."

"I was not there by choice," returned the child; "we didn't know our way, and the two men were very kind to us, and let us travel with them. Do you — do you know them, ma'am?"

"Know 'em, child!" cried the lady of the caravan in a sort of shriek, "know *them!* But you're young and inexperienced, and that's your excuse for asking

sich a question. Do I look as if I know'd 'em? does the caravan look as if *it* know'd em? "

"No, ma'am, no," said the child, fearing she had committed some grievous fault. "I beg your pardon."

It was granted immediately, though the lady still appeared much ruffled and discomposed by the degrading supposition. The child then explained that they had left the races on the first day, and were travelling to the next town on that road, where they purposed to spend the night. As the countenance of the stout lady began to clear up, she ventured to inquire how far it was. The reply was, that the town was eight miles off.

This discouraging information a little dashed the child, who could scarcely repress a tear as she glanced along the darkening road. Her grandfather made no complaint, but he sighed heavily as he leaned upon his staff, and vainly tried to pierce the dusty distance.

The lady of the caravan was in the act of gathering her tea equipage together preparatory to clearing the table, but noting the child's anxious manner she hesitated and stopped. The child courtseyed, thanked her for her information, and, giving her hand to the old man, had already got some fifty yards or so away, when the lady of the caravan called to her to return.

"Come nearer, nearer still"— said she, beckoning to her to ascend the steps. "Are you hungry, child? "

"Not very, but we are tired, and it's — it *is* a long way — "

"Well, hungry or not, you had better have some tea," rejoined her new acquaintance. "I suppose you are agreeable to that, old gentleman?"

The grandfather humbly pulled off his hat and thanked her. The lady of the caravan then bade him come up the steps likewise, but the drum proving an inconvenient table for two, they descended again and sat upon the grass, where she handed down to them the tea-tray, the bread and butter, and the knuckle of ham.

"Set 'em out near the hind wheels, child, that's the best place"— said their friend, superintending the arrangements from above. "Now hand up the teapot for a little more hot water, and a pinch of fresh tea, and then both of you eat and drink as much as you can, and don't spare anything; that's all I ask of you."

As this direction relieved them from any shadow of delicacy or uneasiness, they made a hearty meal and enjoyed it to the utmost.

While they were thus engaged, the lady of the caravan alighted on the earth, and with her hands clasped behind her, and her large bonnet trembling excessively, walked up and down in a measured tread and very stately manner, surveying the caravan from time to time with an air of calm delight, and deriving particu-

lar gratification from the red panels and the brass knocker. When she had taken this gentle exercise for some time she sat down upon the steps and called "George"; whereupon a man in a carter's frock, who had been so shrouded in a hedge up to this time as to see everything that passed without being seen himself, parted the twigs that concealed him, and appeared in a sitting attitude, supporting on his legs a baking-dish, and a half-gallon stone bottle, and bearing in his right hand a knife, and in his left a fork.

"Yes, Missus," said George.

"How did you find the cold pie, George?"

"It warn't amiss, mum."

"Have you nearly finished?"

"Wery nigh, mum." And indeed, after scraping the dish all round with his knife, and carrying the choice brown morsels to his mouth, and after taking such a scientific pull at the stone bottle that his head went further and further back until he lay nearly at his full length upon the ground, this gentleman declared himself quite disengaged, and came forth from his retreat.

"I hope I haven't hurried you, George," said his mistress.

"If you have," returned the follower, "we must make up for it next time, that's all."

"We are not a heavy load, George?"

"That's always what the ladies say," replied the man. "If you see a woman a-driving, you'll always perceive that she never will keep her whip still; the horse can't go fast enough. If cattle have got their proper load, you can never persuade a woman that they'll not bear something more. What is the cause of this here!"

"Would these two travellers make much difference to the horses, if we took them with us?" asked his mistress, pointing to Nell and the old man, who were painfully preparing to resume their journey on foot.

"They'd make a difference in course," said George, doggedly.

"Would they make much difference?" repeated his mistress. "They can't be very heavy."

"The weight o' the pair, mum," said George, eying them with the look of a man who was calculating within half an ounce or so, "would be a trifle under that of Oliver Cromwell."

Nell was very much surprised that the man should be so accurately acquainted with the weight of one whom she had read of in books as having lived considerably before their time, but speedily forgot the subject in the joy of hearing that they were to go forward in the caravan, for which she thanked its lady with unaffected earnestness. She helped with great readiness and alacrity to put away the tea things and other

matters that were lying about, and, the horses being by that time harnessed, mounted into the vehicle, followed by her delighted grandfather. Their patroness then shut the door and sat herself down by her drum at an open window; and, the steps being struck by George and stowed under the carriage, away they went, with a great noise of flapping and creaking and straining; and the bright brass knocker, which nobody ever knocked at, knocking one perpetual double knock of its own accord as they jolted heavily along.

II

MRS. JARLEY'S WAX-WORK

When they had travelled slowly forward for some short distance, Nell ventured to steal a look around the caravan and observe it more closely. One half of it was carpeted, and so partitioned off at the further end as to accommodate a sleeping-place, constructed after the fashion of a berth on board ship, which was shaded, like the little windows, with fair white curtains, and looked comfortable enough, though by what kind of gymnastic exercise the lady of the caravan ever contrived to get into it, was an unfathomable mystery. The other half served for a kitchen, and was fitted up with a stove whose small chimney passed

through the roof. It held also a closet or larder, several chests, a great pitcher of water, and a few cooking utensils and articles of crockery. These latter necessaries hung upon the walls, which, in that portion of the establishment devoted to the lady of the caravan, were ornamented with such gayer and lighter decorations as a triangle and a couple of well-thumbed tambourines.

The lady of the caravan sat at one window in all the pride and poetry of the musical instruments, and little Nell and her grandfather sat at the other in all the humility of the kettle and saucepans, while the machine jogged on and shifted the darkening prospect very slowly. At first the two travellers spoke little, and only in whispers, but as they grew more familiar with the place they ventured to converse with greater freedom, and talked about the country through which they were passing, and the different objects that presented themselves, until the old man fell asleep; which the lady of the caravan observing, invited Nell to come and sit beside her.

"Well, child," she said, "how do you like this way of travelling?"

Nell replied that she thought it was very pleasant indeed, to which the lady assented. . . . She sat looking at the child for a long time in silence, and then getting up, brought out from a corner a large roll of

canvas about a yard in width, which she laid upon the floor and spread open with her foot until it nearly reached from one end of the caravan to the other.

"There, child," she said, "read that."

Nell walked down it, and read aloud, in enormous black letters, the inscription, "JARLEY'S WAX-WORK."

"Read it again," said the lady, complacently.

"Jarley's Wax-Work," repeated Nell.

"That's me," said the lady. "I am Mrs. Jarley."

Giving the child an encouraging look, intended to reassure her and let her know that, although she stood in the presence of the original Jarley, she must not allow herself to be utterly overwhelmed and borne down, the lady of the caravan unfolded another scroll, whereon was the inscription, "One hundred figures the full size of life"; and then another scroll, on which was written, "The only stupendous collection of real wax-work in the world," and then several smaller scrolls, with such inscriptions as "Now exhibiting within"—"The genuine and only Jarley"—"Jarley's unrivalled collection"—"Jarley is the delight of the Nobility and Gentry"—"The Royal Family are the patrons of Jarley."

When she had exhibited these to the astonished child, she brought forth hand bills, some of which were couched in the form of parodies on popular melodies, as "Believe me if all Jarley's wax-

SHE BROUGHT FORTH HAND BILLS.

works so rare" — "I saw thy show in youthful prime" — "Over the water to Jarley"; while, to consult all tastes, others were composed with a view to the lighter and more facetious spirits, as a parody on the favorite air of "If I had a donkey," beginning

> If I know'd a donkey wot wouldn't go
> To see Mrs. JARLEY's wax-work show,
> Do you think I'd acknowledge him?
> Oh no, no!
> Then run to Jarley's —

* * * * *

When she had brought all these testimonials of her important position in society to bear upon her young companion, Mrs. Jarley rolled them up, and having put them carefully away, sat down again, and looked at the child in triumph.

"Never go into the company of a filthy Punch any more," said Mrs. Jarley, "after this."

"I never saw any wax-work, ma'am," said Nell. "Is it funnier than Punch?"

"Funnier!" said Mrs. Jarley, in a shrill voice. "It is not funny at all."

"Oh!" said Nell, with all possible humility.

"It isn't funny at all," repeated Mrs. Jarley. "It's calm and — what's that word again — critical? — no — classical, that's it — it's calm and classical.

No low beatings and knockings about, no jokings and squeakings like your precious Punches, but always the same, with a constantly unchanging air of coldness and gentility, and so lifelike, that if wax-work only spoke and walked about, you'd hardly know the difference. I won't go so far as to say, that, as it is, I've seen wax-work quite like life, but I've certainly seen some life that was exactly like wax-work."

"Is it here, ma'am?" asked Nell, whose curiosity was awakened by this description.

"Is what here, child?"

"The wax-work, ma'am."

"Why, bless you, child, what are you thinking of? How could such a collection be here, where you see everything except the inside of one little cupboard and a few boxes? It's gone on in the other wans to the assembly-rooms, and there it'll be exhibited the day after to-morrow. You are going to the same town, and you'll see it, I dare say. It's natural to expect that you'll see it, and I've no doubt you will. I suppose you couldn't stop away if you was to try ever so much."

"I shall not be in the town, I think, ma'am," said the child.

"Not there!" cried Mrs. Jarley. "Then where will you be?"

"I — I — don't quite know; I'm not certain."

"You don't mean to say that you're travelling about the country without knowing where you're going to?" said the lady of the caravan. "What curious people you are! What line are you in? You looked to me at the races, child, as if you were quite out of your element, and had got there by accident."

"We were there quite by accident," returned Nell, confused by this abrupt questioning. "We are poor people, ma'am, and are only wandering about. We have nothing to do; — I wish we had."

"You amaze me more and more;" said Mrs. Jarley, after remaining for some time as mute as one of her own figures. "Why, what do you call yourselves? Not beggars?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I don't know what else we are," returned the child.

"Lord bless me," said the lady of the caravan, "I never heard of such a thing. Who'd have thought it!"

She remained so long silent after this exclamation, that Nell feared she felt her having been induced to bestow her protection and conversation upon one so poor, to be an outrage upon her dignity that nothing could repair. This persuasion was rather confirmed than otherwise by the tone in which she at length broke silence and said,

"And yet you can read, and write too, I shouldn't wonder?"

"Yes, ma'am," said the child, fearful of giving new offence by the confession.

"Well, and what a thing that is," returned Mrs. Jarley. "*I* can't!"

Nell said "indeed" in a tone which might imply, either that she was reasonably surprised to find the genuine and only Jarley, who was the delight of the Nobility and Gentry and the peculiar pet of the Royal Family, destitute of these familiar arts; or that she presumed so great a lady could scarcely stand in need of such ordinary accomplishments. In whatever way Mrs. Jarley received the response, it did not provoke her to further questioning, or tempt her into any more remarks at the time, for she relapsed into thoughtful silence, and remained in that state so long that Nell withdrew to the other window and rejoined her grandfather, who was now awake.

At length the lady of the caravan shook off her fit of meditation, and summoning the driver to come under the window at which she was seated, held a long conversation with him in a low tone of voice, as if she were asking his advice on an important point, and discussing the pros and cons of some very weighty matter. This conference at length concluded, she drew in her head again, and beckoned Nell to approach.

"And the old gentleman, too," said Mrs. Jarley; "for I want to have a word with him. Do you want a good situation for your granddaughter, master? If you do, I can put her in the way of getting one. What do you say?"

"I can't leave her," answered the old man. "We can't separate. What would become of me without her?"

"I should have thought you were old enough to take care of yourself, if ever you will be," retorted Mrs. Jarley, sharply.

"But he never will be," said the child, in an earnest whisper. "I fear he never will be again. Pray do not speak harshly to him. We are very thankful to you," she added, aloud: "but neither of us could part from the other if all the wealth of the world were halved between us."

Mrs. Jarley was a little disconcerted by this reception of her proposal, and looked at the old man, who tenderly took Nell's hand and detained it in his own, as if she could have very well dispensed with his company or even his earthly existence. After an awkward pause, she thrust her head out of the window again, and had another conference with the driver upon which they did not seem to agree quite so readily as on their former topic of discussion; but they concluded at last, and she addressed the grandfather again.

"If you're really disposed to employ yourself," said Mrs. Jarley, "there would be plenty for you to do in the way of helping to dust the figures, and take the checks, and so forth. What I want your granddaughter for, is to point 'em out to the company; they would be soon learnt, and she has a way with her that people wouldn't think unpleasant, though she does come after me; for I've been always accustomed to go round with visitors myself, which I should keep on doing now, only that my spirits make a little ease absolutely necessary. It's not a common offer, bear in mind," said the lady, rising into the tone and manner in which she was accustomed to address her audiences, "it's Jarley's wax-work, remember. The duty's very light and genteel, the company particular select, the exhibition takes place in assembly-rooms, town-halls, large rooms at inns, or auction galleries. There is none of your open air wagrancy at Jarley's, recollect; there is no tarpaulin and sawdust at Jarley's, remember. Every expectation held out in the hand bills is realized to the utmost, and the whole forms an effect of imposing brilliancy hitherto unrivalled in this kingdom. Remember that the price of admission is only sixpence, and that this is an opportunity which may never occur again!"

Descending from the sublime when she had reached this point, to the details of common life, Mrs. Jarley re-

marked that with reference to salary she could pledge herself to no specific sum until she had sufficiently tested Nell's abilities, and narrowly watched her in the performance of her duties. But board and lodging both for her and her grandfather, she bound herself to provide, and she furthermore passed her word that the board should always be good in quality, and in quantity plentiful.

Nell and her grandfather consulted together, and while they were so engaged, Mrs. Jarley, with her hands behind her, walked up and down the caravan, as she had walked after tea, with uncommon dignity and self-esteem; nor will this appear so slight a circumstance when it is remembered that the caravan was in uneasy motion all the time, and that none but a person of great natural stateliness and acquired grace could have forborne to stagger.

"Now, child," cried Mrs. Jarley, coming to a halt as Nell turned towards her.

"We are very much obliged to you, ma'am," said Nell, "and thankfully accept your offer."

"And you'll never be sorry for it," returned Mrs. Jarley. "I'm pretty sure of that. So as that's all settled, let us have a bit of supper."

In the meanwhile, the caravan blundered on and came at last upon the paved streets of a town which were clear of passengers, and quiet, for it was by this

time near midnight, and the townspeople were all abed. As it was too late an hour to repair to the exhibition room, they turned aside into a piece of waste ground that lay just within the old town-gate, and drew up there for the night, near to another caravan which was employed in conveying from place to place the wax-work.

This machine being empty, for it had deposited its burden at the place of exhibition, and lingered here until its services were again required, was assigned to the old man as his sleeping place for the night; and within its wooden walls Nell made him up the best bed she could, from the materials at hand. For herself, she was to sleep in Mrs. Jarley's own travelling carriage as a signal mark of that lady's favor and confidence.

III

AT THE EXHIBITION

SLEEP hung upon the eyelids of the child so long, that, when she awoke, Mrs. Jarley was already decorated with her large bonnet, and actively engaged in preparing breakfast. She received Nell's apology for being so late with perfect good humour, and said that she

should not have roused her if she had slept on until noon.

"Because it does you good," said the lady of the caravan, "when you're tired, to sleep as long as ever you can, and get the fatigue quite off; and that's another blessing of your time of life — you can sleep so very sound."

"Have you had a bad night, ma'am?" asked Nell.

"I seldom have anything else, child," replied Mrs. Jarley, with the air of a martyr. "I sometimes wonder how I bear it."

Remembering the snores which had proceeded from that cleft in the caravan in which the proprietress of the wax-work passed the night, Nell rather thought she must have been dreaming of lying awake. However, she expressed herself very sorry to hear such a dismal account of her state of health, and shortly afterwards sat down with her grandfather and Mrs. Jarley to breakfast. The meal finished, Nell assisted to wash the cups and saucers, and put them in their proper places, and these household duties performed, Mrs. Jarley arrayed herself in an exceedingly bright shawl for the purpose of making a progress through the streets of the town.

"The wan will come on to bring the boxes," said Mrs. Jarley, "and you had better come in it, child. I am obliged to walk, very much against my will; but the

people expect it of me, and public characters can't be their own masters and mistresses in such matters as these. How do I look, child? "

Nell returned a satisfactory reply, and Mrs. Jarley, after sticking a greát many pins into various parts of her figure, and making several attempts to obtain a full view of her own back, was at last satisfied with her appearance and went forth majestically.

The caravan followed at no great distance, rumbling along with most unwonted noise, stopped at last at the place of exhibition, where Nell dismounted amidst an admiring group of children, who evidently supposed her to be an important item of the curiosities, and were fully impressed with the belief that her grandfather was a cunning device in wax. The chests were taken out with all convenient despatch, and taken in to be unlocked by Mrs. Jarley, who, attended by George and another man in velveteen shorts and a drab hat ornamented with turnpike tickets, were waiting to dispose their contents (consisting of red festoons and other ornamental devices in upholstery work) to the best advantage in the decoration of the room.

They all got to work without loss of time, and very busy they were. As the stupendous collection were yet concealed by cloths, lest the envious dust should injure their complexions, Nell bestirred herself to assist in the embellishment of the room, in which her grand-

father was also of great service. The two men being well used to it, did a great deal in a short time; and Mrs. Jarley served out the tin tacks from a linen pocket like a toll-collector's which she wore for the purpose, and encouraged her assistants to renewed exertion.

* * * * *

When the festoons were all put up as tastily as they might be, the stupendous collection was uncovered, and there were displayed, on a raised platform some two feet from the floor, running round the room and parted from the rude public by a crimson rope breast high, divers sprightly effigies of celebrated characters, singly and in groups, clad in glittering dresses of various climes and times, and standing more or less unsteadily upon their legs, with their eyes very wide open and their nostrils very much inflated, and the muscles of their legs and arms very strongly developed, and all their countenances expressing great surprise. All the gentlemen were very pigeon-breasted and very blue about the beards; and all the ladies were miraculous figures; and all the ladies and all the gentlemen were looking intensely nowhere, and staring with extraordinary earnestness at nothing.

When Nell had exhausted her first raptures at this glorious sight, Mrs. Jarley ordered the room to be cleared of all but herself and the child, and, sitting herself down in an arm-chair in the centre, formally in-

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"THAT," SAID MRS. JARLEY IN HER EXHIBITION TONE.

vested Nell with a willow wand, long used by herself for pointing out the characters, and was at great pains to instruct her in her duty.

"That," said Mrs. Jarley in her exhibition tone, as Nell touched a figure at the beginning of the platform, "is an unfortunate Maid of Honour in the time of Queen Elizabeth, who died from pricking her finger in consequence of working upon a Sunday. Observe the blood which is trickling from her finger; also the gold-eyed needle of the period, with which she is at work."

All this Nell repeated twice or thrice — pointing to the finger and the needle at the right times; and then passed on to the next.

"That, ladies and gentlemen," said Mrs. Jarley, "is Jasper Packlemerton of atrocious memory, who courted and married fourteen wives, and destroyed them all, by tickling the soles of their feet when they were sleeping in the consciousness of innocence and virtue. On being brought to the scaffold and asked if he was sorry for what he had done, he replied yes, he was sorry for having let 'em off so easy, and hoped all christian husbands would pardon him the offence. Let this be a warning to all young ladies to be particular in the character of the gentlemen of their choice. Observe that his fingers are curled as if in the act of tickling, and that his face is represented with a wink,

as he appeared when committing his barbarous murders.'?

When Nell knew all about Mr. Packlemerton, and could say it without faltering, Mrs. Jarley passed on to the fat man, and then to the thin man, the tall man, the short man, the old lady who died of dancing at a hundred and thirty-two, the wild boy of the woods, the woman who poisoned fourteen families with pickled walnuts, and other historical characters and interesting but misguided individuals. And so well did Nell profit by her instructions, and so apt was she to remember them, that by the time they had been shut up together for a couple of hours, she was in full possession of the history of the whole establishment, and perfectly competent to the enlightenment of visitors.

Mrs. Jarley was not slow to express her admiration at this happy result, and carried her young friend and pupil to inspect the remaining arrangements within doors, by virtue of which the passage had already been converted into a grove of green baize hung with the inscriptions she had already seen, and a highly ornamented table placed at the upper end for Mrs. Jarley herself, at which she was to preside and take the money, in company with his Majesty King George the Third, Mr. Grimaldi as clown, Mary Queen of Scots, an anonymous gentleman of the Quaker persuasion, and Mr. Pitt. . . . The preparations without doors had

not been neglected either; a nun of great personal attractions was telling her beads on the little portico over the door; and a brigand with the blackest possible head of hair, and the clearest possible complexion, was at that moment going round the town in a cart, consulting the miniature of a lady.

* * * * *

Unquestionably Mrs. Jarley had an inventive genius. In the midst of the various devices for attracting visitors to the exhibition, little Nell was not forgotten. The light cart in which the brigand usually made his perambulations being gaily dressed with flags and streamers, and the brigand placed therein, contemplating the miniature of his beloved as usual, Nell was accommodated with a seat beside him, decorated with artificial flowers, and in this state and ceremony rode slowly through the town every morning, dispersing handbills from a basket to the sound of drum and trumpet. The beauty of the child, coupled with her gentle and timid bearing, produced quite a sensation in the little country place. The brigand, heretofore a source of exclusive interest in the streets, became a mere secondary consideration, and to be important only as a part of the show of which she was the chief attraction. Grown up folks began to be interested in the bright-eyed girl, and some score of little boys fell desperately in love, and constantly left inclosures of

nuts and apples, directed in small text, at the wax-work door.

This desirable impression was not lost on Mrs. Jarley, who, lest Nell should become too cheap, soon sent the brigand out alone again, and kept her in the exhibition room, where she described the figures every half-hour to the great satisfaction of admiring audiences.

* * * * *

Although her duties were sufficiently laborious, Nell found in the lady of the caravan a very kind and considerate person, who had not only a peculiar relish for being comfortable herself, but for making everybody about her comfortable also; which latter taste, it may be remarked, is, even in persons who live in much finer places than caravans, a far more rare and uncommon one than the first, and is not by any means its necessary consequence. As her popularity procured her various little fees from the visitors on which her patroness never demanded any toll, and as her grandfather too was well treated and useful, she had no cause of anxiety in connection with the wax-work.

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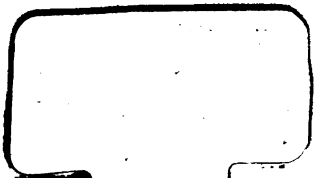
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